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ABSTRACT

The lessons in this 3-part series are intended to provide students with a basic understanding of the relationship between the United States and Mexico, with emphasis on multiple perspectives, conflict and cooperation, and interdependence. This curriculum unit, Part 2, examines three contemporary issues: immigration, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the environment. The introduction presents a rationale, state and national history standards, series goals, matrix of lessons, materials needed, time and suggested sequence of activities, and small-group roles. The unit contains four lessons: (1) "Setting the Context for U.S.-Mexico Relations" (contains a questionnaire, 2 handouts, and 4 maps); (2) "Studying Contemporary Immigration through Small Group Work" (contains a handout, 4 activity cards, 13 resource cards, and group assignments); (3) "What Is NAFTA?: A Look at International Trade and Economics" (contains 2 teacher information cards, a transparency, 2 handouts, 2 activity cards, and a glossary); and (4) "NAFTA and the Environment: The Debate Continues" (contains a handout, a reference sheet for the teacher, web diagram pieces, a transparency, 2 resource sheets, and a student worksheet). (BT)

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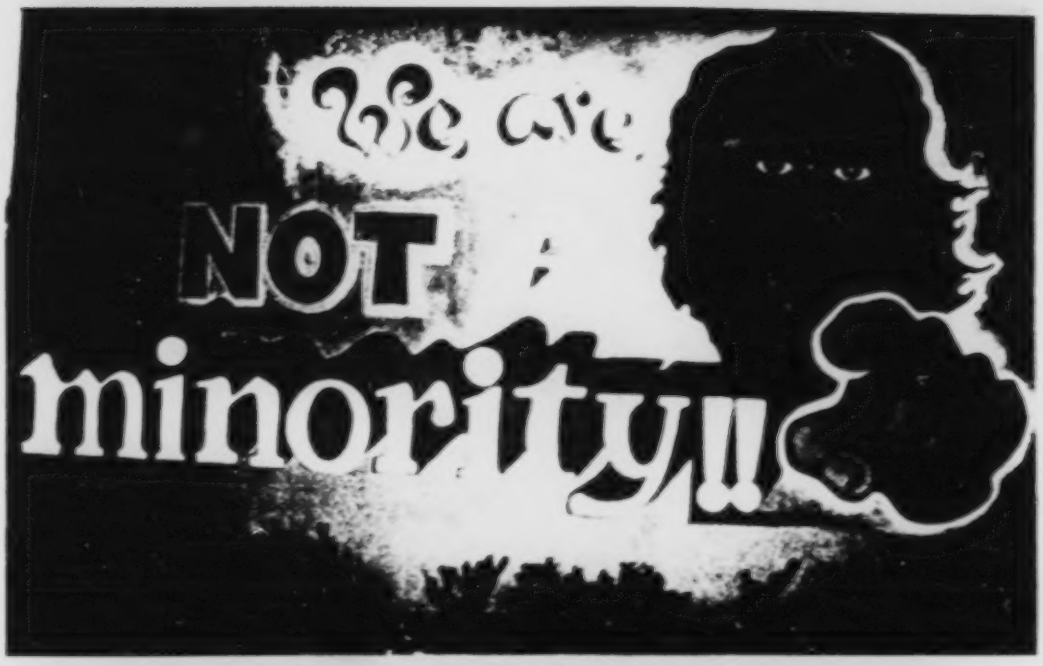

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN U.S.–MEXICO RELATIONS

Developed by
Amy Cheng, Pearl Kim, Selena Lai, Gary Mukai, Lucía Nuñez, and Martín Valadez

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Series Introduction

U.S.–Mexico Relations

A Three-Part Series

Rationale and Introduction

The histories of the United States and Mexico have been closely linked since at least the middle of the 19th century, when Mexico lost half of its territory to the United States with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Since that time, the two countries have had close relations as events that occur in one country invariably affect the other. The presence of a large Mexican-American population in the United States and the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) clearly demonstrate the continued importance of U.S.–Mexico relations.

In light of these close ties, the lessons in this three-part series are intended to provide students with a basic understanding of the relationship between the United States and Mexico. In part one, *Episodes in the History of U.S.–Mexico Relations*, students will examine two important historical episodes. The first episode focuses on an instance of conflict between the two countries, namely, the Mexican–American War in the mid-19th century. The second episode focuses on an instance of cooperation between the two countries, namely, the Bracero Program in the mid-20th century.

In part two, *Contemporary Issues in U.S.–Mexico Relations*, students will examine three key contemporary issues: immigration, NAFTA, and the environment.

In part three, *U.S.–Mexico Economic Interdependence: Perspectives from Both Sides of the Border*, students will examine perspectives on trade, twin cities, and the maquiladoras.

Because the students will not be able to appreciate these historical and contemporary lessons without having some knowledge of the geography of the two countries, each of these three parts of the series begins with a lesson that sets a geographic context for the lesson topics.

The following themes are emphasized throughout the U.S.–Mexico Relations series:

- multiple perspectives
- conflict and cooperation
- interdependence (economic, political, and social) between the two countries

Although all three themes may be explored in all of the lessons, one or two of the themes may be more important in certain lessons.

series introduction

After completing the lessons in this series, the students should understand not only the importance of the relationship between the United States and Mexico, but also how events and changes in Mexico have affected and continue to impact the economy, society, and politics of the United States.

State and National History Standards

Many states recommend the teaching of U.S. relations with Mexico at the middle school level. The *History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*, for example, includes this study at the grade 8 course of study:

> Special attention should be given to the Mexican–American War, its territorial settlements, and its aftermath in the lives of the Mexican families who first lived in the region. (p. 71)

The *History–Social Science Framework for California Schools* also includes the study of Mexico at the grade 10 course of study:

> They [students] should also consider Mexico's relationship with the Yankee colossus to its north, including the lure that the United States holds for Mexico's people seeking economic opportunity. (p. 92)

The *National Standards for History* recommends the teaching of U.S. relations with Mexico at either the 5–12 or 9–12 grade levels, as listed under the "Expansion and Reform" section of the standards:

> 5–12 Explain the causes of the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican–American War and evaluate the provisions and consequences of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
>
> 9–12 Analyze different perspectives on the Mexican–American War. (p. 93)

Episodes in the History of U.S.–Mexico Relations is recommended for grades 8–12. *Contemporary Issues in U.S.–Mexico Relations* is recommended for grades 9–12. *U.S.–Mexico Economic Interdependence: Perspectives from Both Sides of the Border* is recommended for grades 8–12.

Series Goals

Each of the lessons in this curriculum unit lists its specific learning objectives. The following list of objectives reflects larger goals for the three-part U.S.–Mexico Relations series as a whole.

In this curriculum unit, students will:

- develop a basic understanding of the history of U.S.–Mexico relations
- develop a basic understanding of contemporary issues related to immigration from Mexico to the United States, NAFTA, and the environment
- develop a basic understanding of the economic interdependence between the United States and Mexico

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- learn how geography has influenced relations between the United States and Mexico
- appreciate multiple perspectives related to historical episodes and contemporary issues in U.S.–Mexico relations
- learn to think critically and make informed opinions
- evaluate different opinions and generate alternative perspectives on an issue
- learn tools to enhance awareness and communication
- work effectively in small and large groups
- organize and express opinions

Matrix of Lessons

Each of the three parts of the U.S.–Mexico Relations series can be taught individually. However, for teachers interested in utilizing the entire series or selected lessons taken from the three parts of the series, the following matrix is provided as a reference. The horizontal rows of the matrix show how the lessons in each of the three parts are related.

Part One: ***Episodes in the History of U.S.–Mexico Relations***	**Part Two:** ***Contemporary Issues in U.S.–Mexico Relations***	**Part Three:** ***U.S.–Mexico Economic Interdependence: Perspectives from Both Sides of the Border***
Lesson One: Setting the Context	Lesson One: Setting the Context	Lesson One: Setting the Context
Lesson Two: The Fight for Texas and the Mexican–American War		
Lesson Three: Bracero Program	Lesson Two: Immigration	
	Lesson Three: North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)	Lesson Two: Categories of Trade: The U.S.–Mexico Case
	Lesson Four: NAFTA and the Environment	Lesson Three: Interdependence and Devaluation: A Case Study
		Lesson Four: Twin Cities Working Together: A Case Study

Materials

Handouts and primary-source documents have been provided with each activity. Permission is given to reproduce these handouts and documents for classroom use only.

Time, Suggested Sequence of Activities

Episodes in the History of U.S.–Mexico Relations is divided into three lessons. We recommend one class period for Lesson One and two to three class periods each for Lessons Two and Three.

Contemporary Issues in U.S.–Mexico Relations is divided into four lessons. We recommend one class period for Lesson One, and two to three class periods for Lessons Two through Four.

series introduction

U.S.–Mexico Economic Interdependence: Perspectives from Both Sides of the Border is divided into four lessons. We recommend one class periods for Lesson One, and two class periods for Lessons Two through Four.

Small-Group Roles

This three-part U.S.–Mexico Relations series engages students in many small-group activities. Some of the suggested roles and responsibilities for students working in small groups are:

- **Facilitator**: responsible for reading instructions or designating someone in the group to read instructions, for assuring that the group is on task, and for communicating with the instructor
- **Recorder**: responsible for writing answers to questions, taking notes, etc.
- **Timekeeper**: responsible for keeping track of the time allocated for activities
- **Materials Manager**: responsible for obtaining and keeping track of materials used by the group
- **Harmonizer**: responsible for the group process, making sure, for example, that no one dominates the discussion and that everyone is participating
- **Reporter**: responsible for organizing group presentations and presenting results of activities to the class

Subjects

This series is recommended for use in social studies, history, global/international studies, ethnic studies, and contemporary issues classes.

Equipment

- Overhead projector

Icons

For easier reference, the following icons are used throughout the series:

Notes to the Teacher

Small Group Activity

Transparency

Group Presentation

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References

History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools. 1997 Updated Edition. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1988, 1997.

National Standards for History. Los Angeles: University of California, 1996.

Lesson One

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR
U.S.–MEXICO RELATIONS

Organizing Questions

- What does "bilateral" mean?
- What are the basic physical and political geographic features of Mexico?
- Why is the border region between the United States and Mexico important?

Introduction

The United States and Mexico are diverse, complex countries with a shared history. The geographic proximity of the United States and Mexico has allowed for an exchange of ideas, interaction of cultures, and cross movement of people. To understand how U.S.–Mexico relations have developed into what they are today, it is important to know something about geography. A knowledge of geography is helpful when trying to understand bilateral relations, particularly of countries that share a common border.

In addition, it is important to learn about the regions on either side of the border that divides the two countries because that is where the connections and similarities between the two nations are likely to be most noticeable. Studying geography historically will also aid our understanding of the relations between the two countries because, as we will learn, much of what is now the U.S. Southwest was once part of Mexico.

In the first portion of this lesson, students will complete an "Impact on Me" questionnaire to see what they already know about the interdependence of these two countries. They will also be introduced to the concept of bilateralism. In the second portion of this lesson, students will be introduced to the basic physical and political geographic features of Mexico and will examine paired border towns along the U.S.–Mexico border.

Students will receive four maps in this lesson. These maps can be used as a reference for all three parts of the U.S.–Mexico Relations curriculum unit series.

Objectives

knowledge

- to think critically about how geography influences history
- to acquire basic knowledge of the physical and political geography of Mexico

- to understand the interdependence of border towns as it relates to geography

attitude

- to appreciate the interdependence of border towns as it relates to geography
- to consider how U.S.–Mexico relations have affected students' own lives

skill

- to work effectively in small groups
- to develop map skills

Materials

- Questionnaire, Impact on Me, one copy per student
- Handout #1, What Does "Bilateral" Mean?, one copy per small groups of 3–4
- Handout #2, Geographic Background of Mexico, one copy per student
- Physical Map of Mexico, one copy per student
- Political Map of Mexico, one copy per student
- U.S.–Mexico Border Map, one copy per student
- Map of U.S. Expansion, one copy per student

Time

One class period

Procedure

1. Introduce this curriculum unit by informing students that they will be studying U.S.–Mexico relations. This introductory lesson helps to set the context for the U.S.–Mexico Relations curriculum unit series.
2. To help students set a personal context for the contemporary economic and social relationship between the United States and Mexico, distribute a copy of the Questionnaire, Impact on Me, to each student. Allow students 10–15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and write their responses to the discussion questions at the end of the questionnaire. As a class, discuss student responses to the discussion questions.

3. Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Point out to students that they will be studying *bilateral* relations between the United States and Mexico. Distribute Handout #1, What Does "Bilateral" Mean?, to the small groups of students, and ask groups to define "bilateral" as well as consider issues that affect both countries.

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As a class, discuss the group definitions of "bilateral" as well as the issues that affect both countries. Compare their definitions with the following definition from Webster's:

> *adj.* 1: having two sides 2: affecting reciprocally two sides or parties <a bilateral treaty>

4. To set a geographic context for the series, distribute copies of the following maps to each student. Students should refer to these maps throughout the series.
   - Physical Map of Mexico, one copy per student
   - Political Map of Mexico, one copy per student
   - U.S.–Mexico Border Map, one copy per student
   - Map of U.S. Expansion, one copy per student

Have students in partner pairs read through Handout #2, Geographic Background of Mexico. They will need to reference the maps listed above.

5. Debrief by having students offer their responses to the discussion questions raised in Handout #2. Point out that these questions will be further discussed in the various lessons of the U.S.–Mexico Relations curriculum series.

IMPACT ON ME

Directions: Listed below are nine factual statements about the economic and social relationship between Mexico and the United States. In each case, you should decide how much impact that fact has on your life, on Mexico, and on the United States. In each box, place a minus sign (–) for little or no impact, or a plus sign (+) for moderate or great impact. Lastly, write your responses to the discussion questions at the end of this questionnaire.

1. The North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico reduces or eliminates tariffs on goods and services.

❑ Impact on me
❑ Impact on Mexico
❑ Impact on the United States

2. Mexico protested a U.S. ban on imports of tuna from Mexico because the Mexican fishing industry uses nets that capture and kill dolphins along with the tuna.

❑ Impact on me
❑ Impact on Mexico
❑ Impact on the United States

3. T-shirts, jeans, and other articles of clothing sold in the United States are sewn together by Mexican women working in factories on the U.S.–Mexico border.

❑ Impact on me
❑ Impact on Mexico
❑ Impact on the United States

4. Many U.S., Asian, and European manufacturers have located assembly plants in Mexico.

❑ Impact on me
❑ Impact on Mexico
❑ Impact on the United States

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5. Mexico is the United States' third-largest trading partner after Canada and Japan.

- ❑ Impact on me
- ❑ Impact on Mexico
- ❑ Impact on the United States

6. Mexico exports fruits and vegetables to the United States.

- ❑ Impact on me
- ❑ Impact on Mexico
- ❑ Impact on the United States

7. California exports electronic parts, machinery, engines, and transportation equipment to Mexico.

- ❑ Impact on me
- ❑ Impact on Mexico
- ❑ Impact on the United States

8. Restrictions on travel between Mexico and the United States for business and professional workers were removed by the North American Free Trade Agreement.

- ❑ Impact on me
- ❑ Impact on Mexico
- ❑ Impact on the United States

9. Mexican immigrants to the United States, who commonly work for minimum wage, help keep down the price of many goods in the United States.

- ❑ Impact on me
- ❑ Impact on Mexico
- ❑ Impact on the United States

questionnaire

Discussion Questions:

Which of the above facts had or has the greatest impact on you as an individual? Why?

Which of the above facts had or has the greatest impact on Mexico? Why?

Which of the above facts had or has the greatest impact on the United States? Why?

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WHAT DOES BILATERAL MEAN?

Background
The bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico provide the conceptual framework for this U.S.–Mexico Relations curriculum unit series. Understanding how policies, events, and issues impact populations on both sides of the border will be emphasized throughout this series.

Using a dictionary:

Look up what the prefix "bi-" means._____

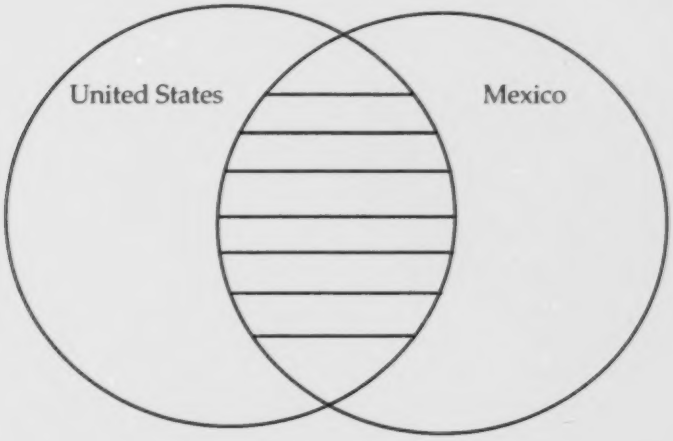
Look up what "lateral" means._____

Based on the definitions of each part of the word, what do you think "bilateral" means? Write your own definition. Then compare your definition with the dictionary's.
Your definition:

The dictionary's definition:

handout #1

What do you know about U.S.–Mexico relations? Write some issues that affect both countries in the overlapping area of the two circles shown below.



Why is it important to study bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico?

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GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF MEXICO

While reading this handout, consider and discuss the questions that appear. Assign one student to write a summary of your pair's discussion of the questions.

Background Information:

When Mexico achieved independence in 1821 it was twice as large as it is today. Soon, however, much of the country's northern territory was lost to the United States. Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and part of Colorado once belonged to Mexico. Refer to the map of U.S. expansion and comment on the following questions:

- Would Mexico have developed differently had it maintained its original territory?
- Do you think the United States would be as powerful had it not acquired this territory from Mexico?

Although the area encompassed by contemporary Mexico is smaller than that of the United States, the physical geography of Mexico is as varied as that of the United States. We must remember that both countries are part of the continent of North America and because they are next to each other, they have some similarities in their physical geography—particularly along the 2,000-mile border that they share.

Mexico is the third-largest country in Latin America and its geography is generally divided into four climate zones. The *Tierra Caliente* (or hot land) extends from sea level to 2,600 feet altitude and includes the coastal lowlands as well as parts of *Baja California* and *Yucatán*. The *Tierra Templada* (or temperate land) lies between 2,600 and 6,000 feet, and the majority of Mexico (about 75 percent) lies within this climate zone. In addition, Mexico has a *Tierra Fría* (or cold land), which includes regions that are at 6,000 to 12,000 feet altitude, and a *Tierra Helada* (or frozen land), which includes those regions more than 12,000 feet above sea level.

Referring to both the physical and political maps of Mexico, read through the following:

In terms of rainfall, the farther south you travel the wetter the country becomes. Most of *Baja California* and the other northern Mexican states bordering the United States are quite arid, despite the presence of the *Rio Grande* river. In the southern Central Plateau, there are three main rivers: the *Lerma*, the *Pánuco-Montezuma*, and the upper *Balsas*. The great amount of rainfall creates lakes, such as *Chapala*, and smaller rivers. Unfortunately, none of the rivers has been able to provide a good means of transportation for Mexico. Transportation is further made difficult by the two mountain ranges, the *Sierra Madre Oriental* (on the east) and the *Sierra Madre Occidental* (on the west), which traverse much of the country and continue north into the United States. The southern edge of the eastern mountain range in the eastern part of the nation is formed by several volcanoes, including *Popocatépetl* (17,887 feet), *Iztaccíhuatl* (17,343 feet), and *Orizaba* (18,700 feet). Some of these volcanoes are still active.

Mexico is bordered on the north by the United States, on the west by the *Pacific Ocean*, on the northeast by the *Gulf of Mexico*, and on the northwest by the *Gulf of California*, which separates the *Baja California* peninsula from the rest of Mexico. In the south the

country narrows to a strip called the *Isthmus of Tehuantepec*, then extends to the Yucátan peninsula where it borders with the countries of Guatemala and Belize.

Mexico is currently divided into 31 states plus the Federal District. Six of these states—*Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León,* and *Tamaulipas*—border with the United States. Since these states are geographically closer to the United States than to Mexico City, they have had a close relationship, particularly economically, with their northern neighbor. Mexicans on the border often work and shop within the United States and many U.S. companies have set up shops along the border. Although these Mexican border states had historically been very sparsely populated, their populations have boomed in recent decades. In fact, currently five of Mexico's ten largest cities are located within a state bordering the United States. Like their population, the economies of these Mexican border states have increased dramatically in recent years and much of that increase can be directly attributed to U.S. companies and U.S. capital.

Referring to the U.S.–Mexico border map, consider the following questions:

- What types of interaction do you think people have with those on the other side of the border?
- In what ways might the culture of one country affect the other country?
- Do you think it is important for city officials in twin cities along the border to interact or work on issues such as the environment?

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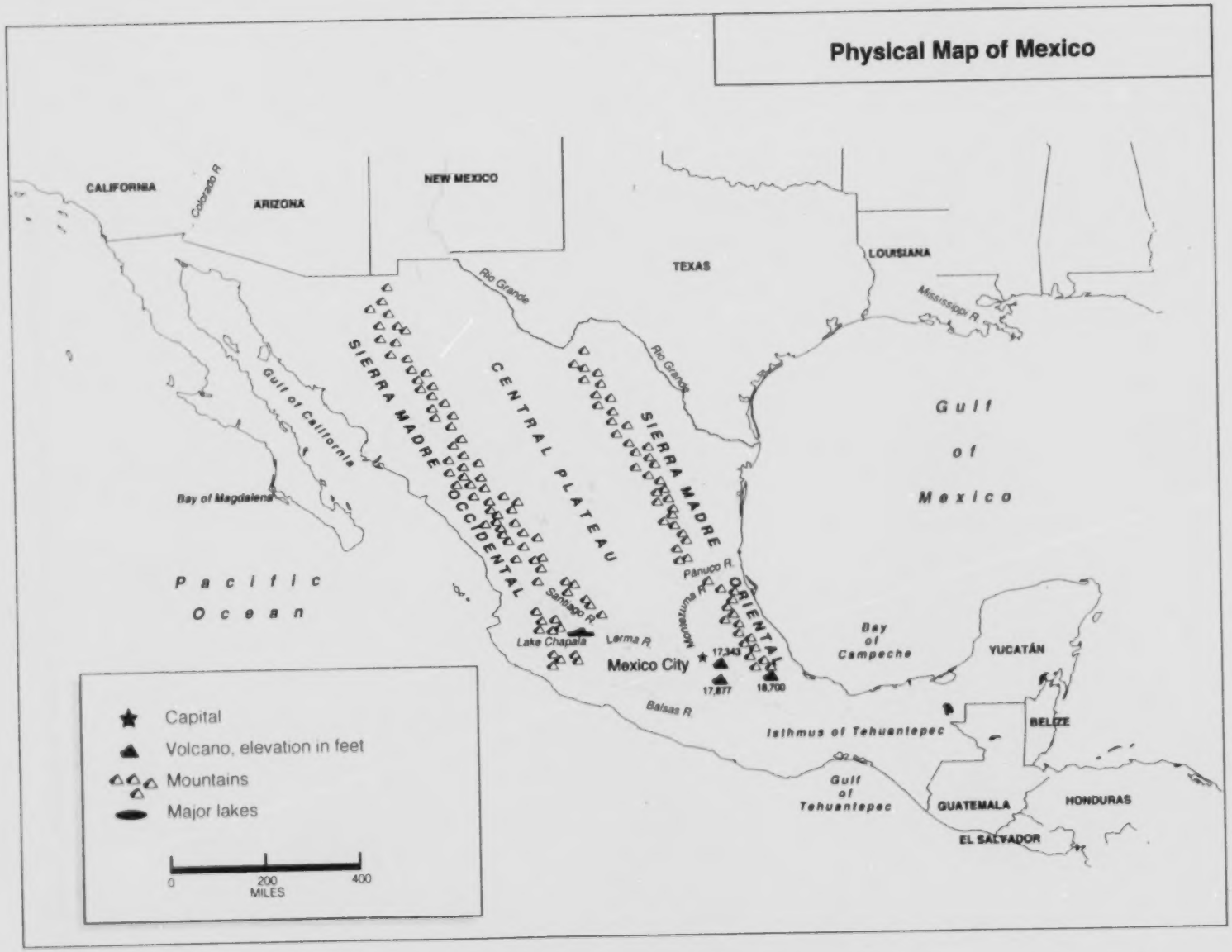
PHYSICAL MAP OF MEXICO

POLITICAL MAP OF MEXICO

U.S.–MEXICO BORDER MAP

MAP OF U.S. EXPANSION



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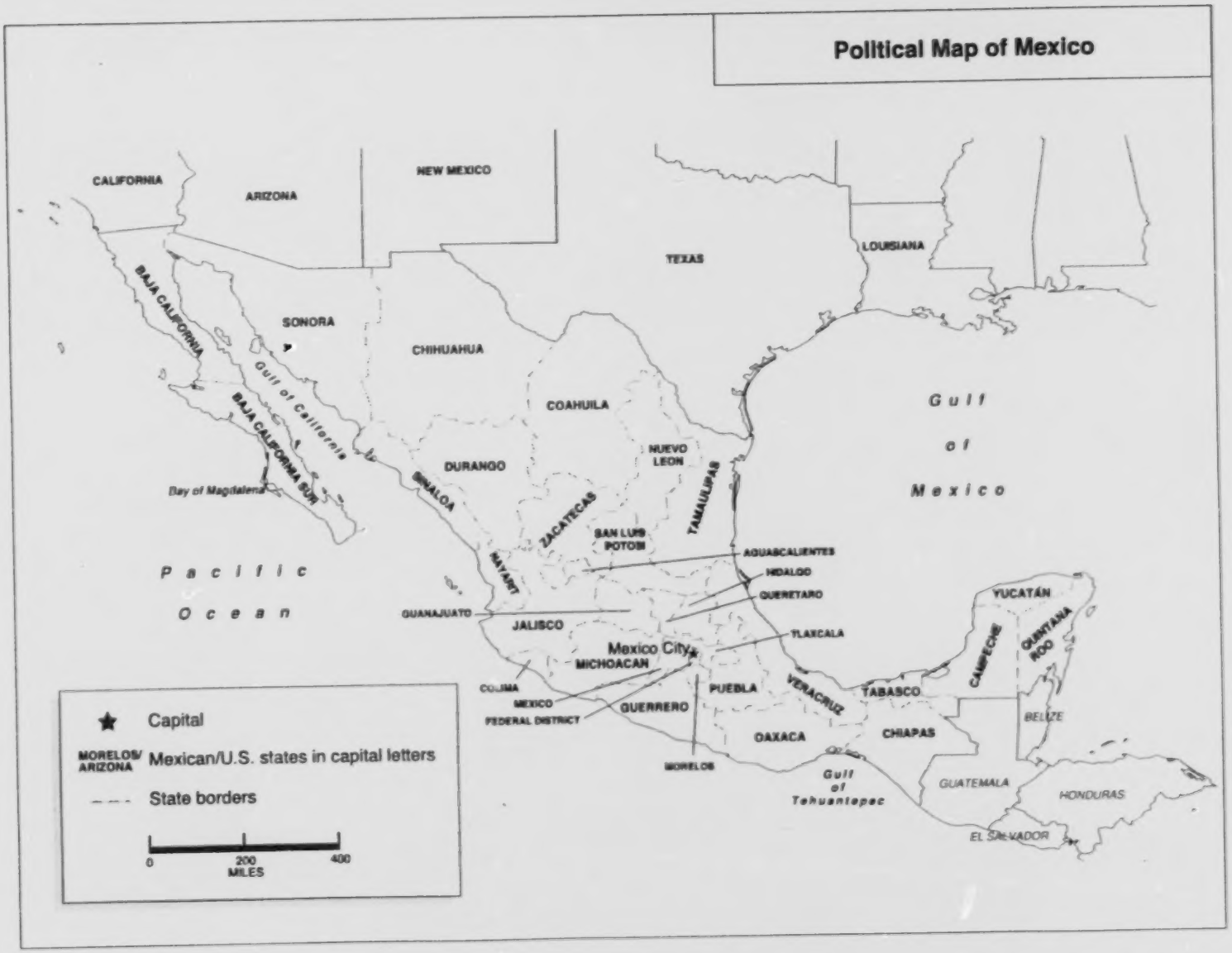

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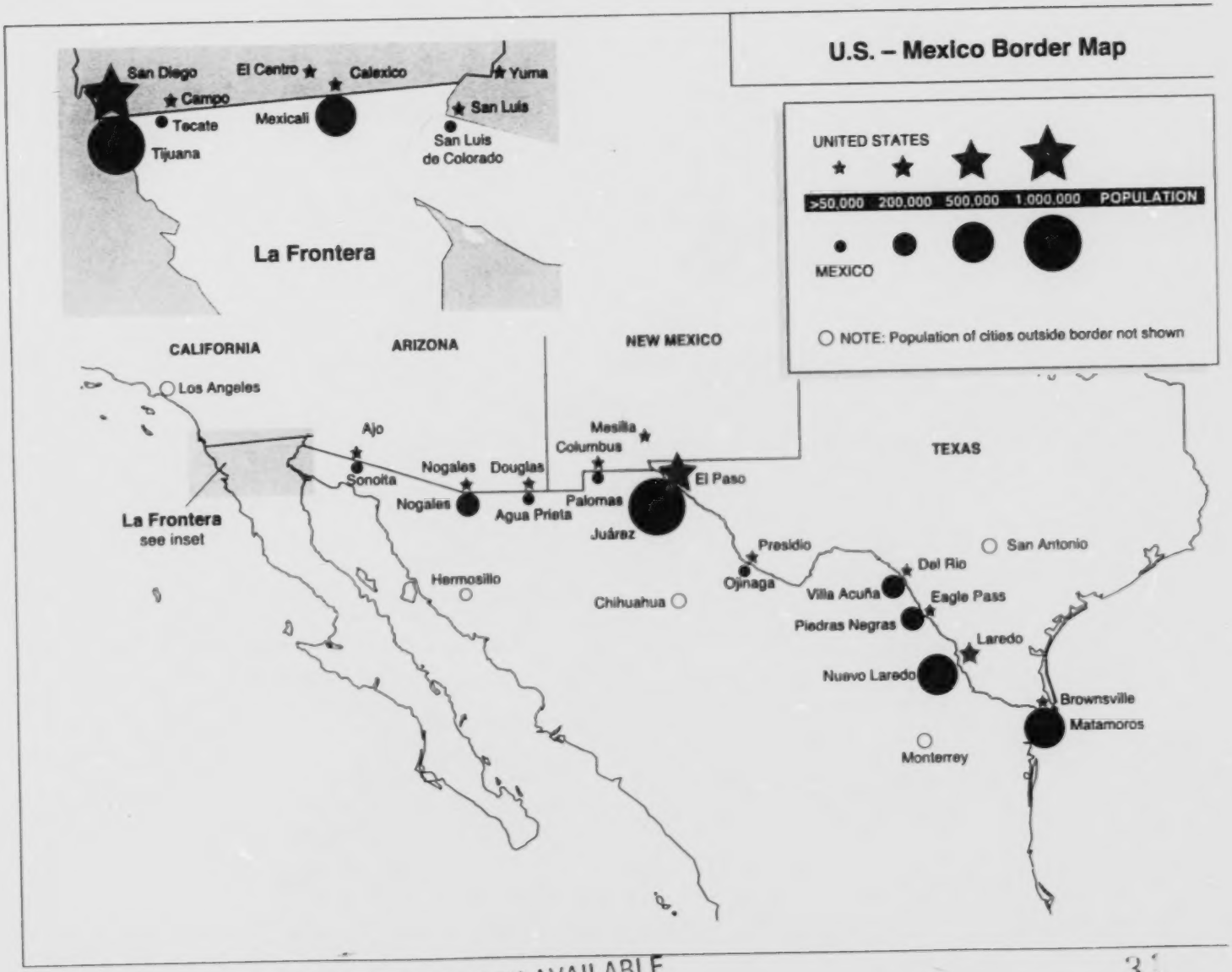

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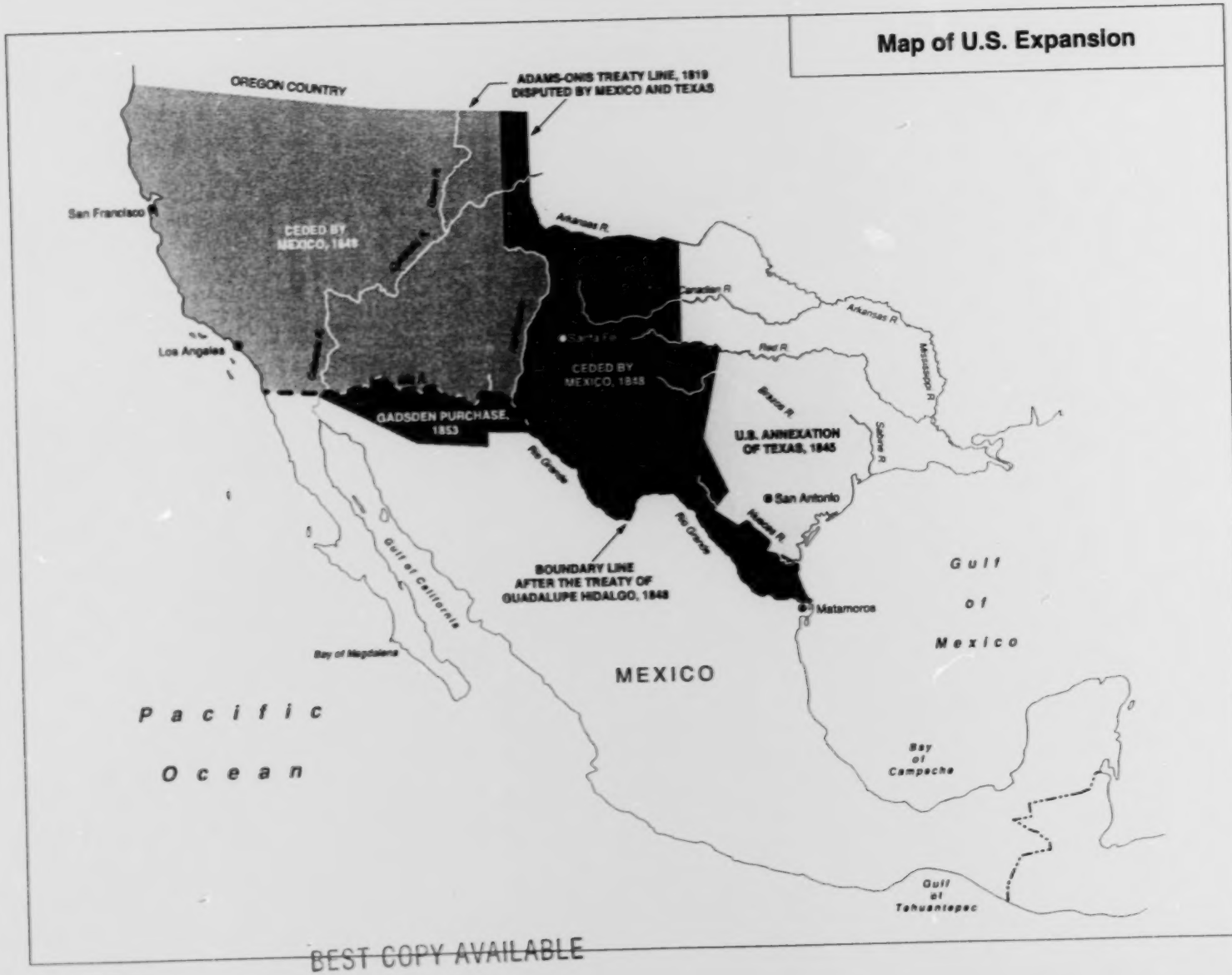

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Lesson Two

STUDYING CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION

THROUGH SMALL-GROUP WORK

Organizing Questions

- What are some of the issues surrounding present-day Mexican immigration to the United States?
- What is the importance of immigration in the context of U.S.–Mexico relations?

Introduction

It is a fact that the United States is a country of immigrants. From the earliest settlers to the present-day immigrants, the nation has witnessed this social phenomenon for hundreds of years. People from virtually every country around the globe have immigrated to the United States at some point or another. Among the U.S. population today, about 80 percent have their origins in southern and eastern Europe, and other European countries such as Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands have made large contributions to the immigrant population as well. African, Asian, and many other ethnic groups have also contributed to the cultural diversity of the United States.

One good example of human movement across borders is that between the United States and Mexico. In fact, immigration from Mexico to the United States has a long historical tradition dating from the late 19th century to the present. The battles and chaos brought about by the Mexican Revolution in the early 1900s, for example, resulted in mass migrations of Mexican refugees to the United States. During World War II, in response to the labor shortage in the U.S. agricultural sector, official programs such as the Bracero Program brought Mexican laborers to fill the need on farms.

One may assert that present-day Mexican immigration is a residual effect from the past. In analyzing the current northward flow, however, one can see that many new factors have developed to draw the people from Mexico across the border. In considering the various reasons why people leave their homelands for the United States, one must analyze the many pull and push factors that influence the decision to migrate. Some of the more prominent pull factors include more job opportunities, better wages, greater educational opportunities, and social services. In addition, among the push factors are the population growth in Mexico, unemployment, and recurring economic crises. Most immigrants from Mexico tend to settle in the large Mexican-American communities in California, Texas, New Mexico, Illinois, Arizona, and Colorado.

lesson two

Although Mexican immigrants are involved in all areas and levels of the workforce, the great majority of them work in agriculture or are urban laborers. Most of them send money to Mexico regularly, and many are here on a temporary basis and return once they have saved enough money for themselves and their families.

Often, relations between the United States and Mexico have been put to a test as a result of the immigration issue. Legislation related to Mexico at the state and federal levels in the United States, along with formal measures taken by the United States and Mexico, often seem to deal with the controversy over Mexican immigration.

While some advocates call for an increase in regulated immigration, many others feel the need to address problems that immigration has caused over the years. Certainly, one cannot deny the many positive influences that immigration has brought about on the U.S. landscape. People who have come from other countries and settled in the United States have not only enriched the cultural heritage of Americans, but also worked hard to boost the economy and improve the well-being of all U.S. residents.

Along with the benefits, however, are the problems that immigration can cause. Some people believe that the influx of people from other parts of the world is too large for the United States to sustain without the occurrence of serious social, economic, and political complications.

Regardless of the speculations, it is a fact that the rising immigrant population is a popular and highly charged topic that has often dominated debates in political, economic, and social arenas.

In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to examine first-hand some of the different sides of this complex issue. Students will analyze the viewpoints of different people and organizations regarding immigration from Mexico to the United States. Though certainly no simple conclusion exists for such a multifaceted and sensitive issue as immigration, after completing the activities in this lesson, students should have a broader knowledge of the issues involving the topic and a better appreciation of its complexity.

Objectives

- to have students learn about issues surrounding present-day Mexican immigration to the United States
- to provide numerous perspectives on a large-scale social phenomenon impacting the United States and Mexico
- to have students analyze the importance of immigration in the context of U.S.– Mexico relations
- to have students use their multiple intelligences to analyze documents, interpret data, and analyze and create art in various forms
- to acknowledge the similarities and differences that exist between Mexican immigration and immigration from other countries to the United States

Activity Notes

Some activities in this lesson include group projects that deal primarily with certain perspectives on Mexican immigration. To optimize the use of this lesson, students in groups should be allowed to engage in most if not all of the activities. In this way, every student should come away with a well-rounded experience in studying this many-sided issue. The chart below offers suggestions on "rounds" that the groups can take to ensure they engage in all the activities.

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	Group F	Group G	Group H
Round 1	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4
Round 2	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 1
Round 3	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 1	Activity 2
Round 4	Activity 4	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3

In addition, teachers should note and make the students aware of the sensitive nature of the topic. In particular, students of Mexican origin may have different reactions to the activities and their outcomes. At times, working with the activities may provoke strong emotional responses from the students and teachers. The following are some suggestions for creating a classroom in which safe and meaningful discussion can take place:

- Respect confidentiality.
- Be considerate in listening to each student's ideas and/or opinions.
- Curb the urge to blame something on someone or some people.
- Separate feedback from grading.
- Always keep in mind the diversity and dynamics of the classroom.

Materials

Introduction

- Handout #1: Present-Day Mexican Immigration to the United States, one copy per student

Activity 1: Relations Between the United States and Mexico

- Activity Card, one copy
- Resource Cards #1–4, one copy of each

Activity 2: Migradollars

- Activity Card, one copy
- Resource Cards #1–3, one copy of each

Activity 3: Mexican Retablos

- Activity Card, one copy

- Resource Cards #1–2, one copy of each

Activity 4: The Mexican-American Experience

- Activity Card, one copy
- Resource Cards #1–3, one copy of each

Closing Activity: MexAmerica

- Resource Card #1, one copy
- Group Assignments, one copy

Time

Each of the small-group activities should take one to two class periods.

Teacher Preparation

1. Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Many teachers find that assigning roles to each member of the group encourages full participation. Small-group roles are suggested in the series introduction.
2. Create a chart that lists the students, the groups, and their roles.

Procedure: Part One, Activities 1–4

1. Explain to the students that they will be working in groups to examine a variety of perspectives on how immigration impacts people in the United States and in Mexico. Introduce the information contained in the introduction of this lesson to the class either by providing a summary of it or by having students read the information, which is repeated in Handout #1, Present-Day Mexican Immigration to the United States.
2. Tell students that they will each have a particular role in their small-group activities. Show the students the chart listing the students, the groups, and the roles.
3. Explain to the students that their group will have an Activity Card that provides instructions and a group task, and Resource Cards that contain information for their group activity. Distribute one Activity Card and the accompanying Resource Cards to each group.

4. Give each group one or two class periods to work on their activity. Have a reporter from each group share with the class brief summaries of their group's work.

Part Two, Activities 1–4

1. Rotate the activities so that each group has a new activity. If time allows, have each group complete all four activities to gain a more complete picture of the immigration issue.
2. After completing the activities, students should come away with a good grasp of the current situation on Mexican immigration and how it affects relations between the United States and Mexico.

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Possible debriefing questions are as follows:

- How does immigration impact people in the United States politically? Economically? Socially?
- How does immigration impact people in Mexico politically? Economically? Socially?
- What does bilateralism mean?
- What does multilateralism mean?
- Considering all of the above, what are the possible effects of Mexican immigration on relations between the United States and Mexico?
- Can you think of some ways the leaders of Mexico and the United States can address the issues surrounding immigration? Take into account the terms "bilateralism" and/or "multilateralism."

Closing Activity: MexAmerica

Teacher Preparation: Make a copy of Resource Card #1, Overview of MexAmerica, for each group. Assign one task to each group. If you run out of tasks, assign the same task to more than one group.

In this final activity, students in groups will create an imaginary region consisting of border towns that currently dot the areas to the north and south of the U.S.–Mexico border. The purpose of the activity is for students to understand the intricacies and complex issues that surround immigration and to analyze them in the larger context of U.S.–Mexico relations.

Students can utilize the information and knowledge they gathered from the previous activities on immigration for this closing activity. In addition, students are encouraged to spend some time doing research for the activity either during class or as homework.

1. Have each group study Resource Card #1, Overview of MexAmerica.

2. Assign one of the tasks listed on Group Assignments to each group, and allow at least one class period for students to work. If possible, have the students do research for their assignments either during class time or as homework.

   Good resources for information are as follows:

   - Library (books and other materials on border towns, border culture, MexAmerica)
   - Internet (searches on border towns, border culture, MexAmerica)

3. After all the groups have finished their assignments, allot one class period to have each group make a presentation in front of the class.

4. As each group is presenting, list the key points of each presentation on the blackboard.

5. After the presentations, have the students answer the following questions as a class:

   - What is a border? What is a border in the context of MexAmerica?
   - Define the political, economic, and social structure of MexAmerica.
   - What issues surrounding language and culture arise out of a region such as MexAmerica?
   - How does human movement within and around the region impact MexAmerica?
   - If MexAmerica really existed, how would it alter relations between the United States and Mexico?
   - Interpret the following quote:

     "Mexico is part of America's future because Mexico and Mexicans are a part of our past. The peoples of MexAmerica have fashioned bonds that cannot be broken; the economies of MexAmerica have forged ties that can be severed only at great cost.

     There are familial ties no law can readily undo, migratory habits of border residents not willingly altered. The vigorous economies of the modern Southwest retain their Mexican connection."[1]

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PRESENT-DAY MEXICAN IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

It is a fact that the United States is a country of immigrants. From the earliest settlers to the present-day immigrants, the nation has witnessed this social phenomenon for hundreds of years. People from virtually every country around the globe have immigrated to the United States at some point or another. Among the U.S. population today, about 80 percent have their origins in southern and eastern Europe, and other European countries such as Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands have made large contributions to the immigrant population as well. African, Asian, and many other ethnic groups have also contributed to the cultural diversity of the United States.

One good example of human movement across borders is that between the United States and Mexico. In fact, immigration from Mexico to the United States has a long historical tradition dating from the late 19th century to the present. The battles and chaos brought about by the Mexican Revolution in the early 1900s, for example, resulted in mass migrations of Mexican refugees to the United States. During World War II, in response to the labor shortage in the U.S. agricultural sector, official programs such as the Bracero Program brought Mexican laborers to fill the need on farms.

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Although Mexican immigrants are involved in all areas and levels of the workforce, the great majority of them work in agriculture or are urban laborers. Most of them send money to Mexico regularly, and many are here on a temporary basis and return once they have saved enough money for themselves and their families.

Often, relations between the United States and Mexico have been put to a test as a result of the immigration issue. Legislation related to Mexico at the state and federal levels in the United States, along with formal measures taken by the United States and Mexico, often seem to deal with the controversy over Mexican immigration.

While some advocates call for an increase in regulated immigration, many others feel the need to address problems that immigration has caused over the years. Certainly, one cannot deny the many positive influences that immigration has brought about on the U.S. landscape.

handout #1

People who have come from other countries and settled in the United States have not only enriched the cultural heritage of Americans, but also worked hard to boost the economy and improve the well-being of all U.S. residents.

Along with the benefits, however, are the problems that immigration can cause. Some people believe that the influx of people from other parts of the world is too large for the United States to sustain without the occurrence of serious social, economic, and political complications.

Regardless of the speculations, it is a fact that the rising immigrant population is a popular and highly charged topic that has often dominated debates in political, economic, and social arenas.

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Relations Between the United States and Mexico

BACKGROUND

Over the years, several key measures have been taken by the United States in regard to Mexican immigration. One of the most prominent and significant in recent years is the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which sought to curb illegal immigration while granting amnesty to illegal U.S. residents who had lived in the country continuously since January 1, 1982.

Another important official arrangement established between the United States and Mexico is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which took effect on January 1, 1994. Among the major provisions under NAFTA is the clause about employment, which affirms that barriers designed to limit Mexican immigration must remain in force. Officials believed that NAFTA would create more jobs on both sides of the U.S.–Mexico border and control the number of Mexicans entering the United States.

Finally, in November of 1994, a very heated debate took place with regard to a particular piece of state legislation. California's Proposition 187, a ballot initiative that blocks illegal immigrants from public schools and social services, was passed by the voters but never really took effect. In 1998, the state measure was declared unconstitutional by a federal court, and since then, it has been put to permanent rest after California Governor Gray Davis agreed to a settlement that abandoned the chance for an appeal.

Official measures such as the above have all been controversial and have impacted relations between the United States and Mexico in varying degrees. For instance, although NAFTA is a cooperative act between the two countries, there has been much criticism about the provisions in the agreement. In particular, opponents of NAFTA are fearful of more illegal immigration that may be caused by the free trade between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Many also believe that Proposition 187, though never enacted, caused a great rift in U.S.–Mexico relations.

INSTRUCTIONS

As a group, read the newspaper articles (Resource Cards #1–4) about Mexican immigration. Discuss the following questions before beginning to work on the group task.

1. According to the articles, what are some of the current issues involving Mexican immigration?

2. How do the formal measures discussed in the articles impact U.S.–Mexico relations?

GROUP TASK

Reflecting on the articles you have read and your own knowledge about immigration, compile a list of pros and cons about Mexican immigration to the United States. Be sure to have every member of your group express comments both in favor of and against the topic.

After completing the list, write two editorials for the school newspaper: one in favor of Mexican immigration, and the other against Mexican immigration.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

STUDY HAILS EFFECT OF MEXICANS ON CALIFORNIA

By Judith Cummings, Special to *The New York Times*
Source: *The New York Times*, December 10, 1985.

LOS ANGELES—A new study of the impact of Mexican immigrants on California concludes such immigration "has probably been an economic asset" to the state and says no "immigration crisis" exists here.

"Our evidence suggests that Mexican immigrants may actually have stimulated manufacturing employment by keeping wages competitive," which enabled manufacturers to compete with foreign producers, said the study, released today.

The report, "Mexican Immigration into California: Current and Future Effects," was prepared by the Rand Corporation, a nonprofit public policy research institute based in Santa Monica. It was sponsored and paid for by the California Roundtable, an organization of 90 of California's largest companies.

The report did not address the issue of whether Mexican immigrants are displacing either whites or other minority groups from jobs. It said, however, that wage levels of non-Hispanic whites and blacks were both "substantially higher" in California than their counterparts nationwide. "Thus, even if the presence of a large pool of Mexican workers has slowed wage increases, it has certainly not erased the earnings advantage enjoyed by California's Anglo and black workers," the report said.

Surge in Immigrants Seen

According to the report, there are between 1.2 and 1.5 million Mexican immigrants in California today and 85 percent of them live in southern California, more than 50 percent in Los Angeles County alone. It projected that the numbers of Mexican immigrants in the state "could almost triple" in the next 15 years.

Fully 45 percent of the state's Hispanic population are either immigrants or the children of immigrants, the report said.

The researchers said that overall, "immigrants' contributions in the form of taxes exceed the cost of providing public services that they use," provided that the cost of education was excluded.

It added that the immigrants' use of public services was likely to increase as more of them took up permanent residency in California and made use of available education and other services.

Taxes and Services

The report qualified its findings by noting a lack of reliable data about tax contributions and about how much it costs to provide immigrants such services. "Furthermore, if, as some maintain, such estimates should include the indirect costs of providing services to citizens displaced by Mexican workers, it is probably impossible to calculate the full costs," the authors said.

Regarding welfare costs, the authors said that the census data they examined indicated that less than 5 percent of all Mexican immigrants, including citizens, legal residents and illegal aliens, were receiving some form of cash assistance in 1980.

The report credits Mexican immigrants with having slowed the growth of wages in California. In the 1970s, growth in wages in California fell 12 percent behind the national average. In Los Angeles it was said to be 15 percent slower than the national average. The report said that "by keeping costs low, slow wage growth enabled the manufacturing sector to maintain a better competitive position vis-à-vis foreign producers.

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RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

U.S. MIGRANT LAW FALLS HARD ON JOBLESS IN CENTRAL MEXICO

By William Branigin, Washington Post Foreign Service

Source: © 1987, *The Washington Post*, March 3, 1987. Reprinted with permission.

Tarimbaro, MEXICO—Less than a month ago, Saul Vasquez, 21, was earning $3.65 an hour as a cook in a Chicago candy factory. Now he cannot earn that much in an entire day of doing odd jobs to support his wife and month-old baby.

After paying $700 to one of the guides known as coyotes and crossing the U.S.-Mexican border illegally last year, he had made his way to Chicago and worked in the factory for five months before managers asked him for a social security card, which he did not have.

"I was fired because of the new law," Vasquez said.

He referred to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 that amnesties illegal aliens who have lived in the United States continuously since January 1, 1982, but provides stiff penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens after May 6. Interviews here in Michoacán State with returnees from California to Texas and as far north as Chicago suggest that the legislation already is starting to have an impact.

Among Mexicans who have traditionally relied on generally low-paying jobs in the United States in the absence of work at home, there are signs of alarm that the source of that employment is drying up.

And there are indications that concern is growing among local leaders who fear the loss of the Mexican economy's traditional safety valve—the U.S. jobs and remittances that help offset this country's inability to provide employment for the nearly 1 million Mexicans who enter the work force each year.

With the peso declining daily against the dollar—it recently passed the 1,000-to-the-dollar mark, compared to 500-to-the-dollar a year ago—Mexico's *mojados*, or "wet ones," are still crossing the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexican border in large numbers. But now, some who have made the trip report, many illegals are finding it tougher to get jobs, and some are coming back frustrated by their experiences with the new U.S. immigration law.

Of 30 undocumented workers at the Chicago candy factory, according to Vasquez, he knew of 21 who were dismissed on the ostensible grounds that they lacked proper documents. Although U.S. officials knowledgeable about immigration matters suggested there may have been other reasons for the firings, Vasquez said he understood that the factory was not waiting for the law to take effect.

"Chicago's dead," said Vasquez, who gave up a factory job in Mexico City to seek employment in the United States for the first time last year. "I could go back to Florida or California, but that's field work." He added that if the immigration law is rigorously applied, "I will not go back."

U.S. immigration officials say they have received word that illegal aliens are returning from the United States to other Mexican states, to neighboring Guatemala and on to El Salvador. The officials also report that apprehensions of illegal border-crossers have dropped by 25 to 30 percent this year, which may indicate that fewer people are making the trip.

Although figures vary widely, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates there are 6 million to 8 million illegal aliens in the United States, 50 to 60 percent of them Mexican. The INS says nearly 4 million aliens may apply for

amnesty under the various provisions of the new law and about half will be eligible.

In an indication of high-level Mexican concern about the new law, Mexican consular officials based in 13 U.S. cities have been called to a meeting now being held in Mexico City to discuss the legislation's impact on undocumented workers and its consequences for Mexico.

In a recent interview with the Mexican daily *El Nacional*, President Miguel de la Madrid said he expected the new law to result in "a reduction in the flow of migration toward the United States" and acknowledged this could become "a serious element in the development of Mexico."

In Michoacán, generations of residents have sought relief from their poverty in *el norte*, as the United States is often called here. Located in the heartland about 500 miles south of the U.S. border, this state of about 4 million people ranks as one of the poorest in Mexico and a primary source of braceros, or farm laborers, in the United States since the 1940s.

Many, like Raul Acosta, who said he spent 15 years working on farms in California and in construction in Dallas, never learn English, but live in communities of their fellow illegal aliens, often from the same town or state in Mexico. Acosta, 44, said he now has two sons working illegally in Oregon harvesting hops.

"The kids write me that there are rumors they're going to be thrown out in May," Acosta said as he sat in the courtyard of Tarimbaro's town hall.

Hermilo Camarena, 26, a secondary school teacher here, went to the United States as a tourist and worked illegally for four months as a busboy in a Reno casino. "There's a lot of speculation about the new law, but not much information" among Mexican illegals in the United States, he said. "Almost nobody has the necessary papers, and now those who are going to the United States are not getting work, but living at the expense of friends."

Roberto Ayala, 23, said he went to the United States illegally 3 1/2 years ago and found a job as a salad fixer in a Chicago restaurant. When he left late last year to visit his family here, he said, he was promised that he could get his job back at the same $5.50 per hour when he returned.

But after paying a coyote $600 to take him across the border illegally again and returning to Chicago in January, Ayala said, he "had to sign a paper because of the new law" and was asked to produce a social security card. He said he was also told that if he wanted to work he would have to take a $1-an-hour pay cut. He refused and returned to Mexico.

Now he hopes to make the risky crossing again in May and test the impact of the new law. "In the United States I could earn $1,000 in two months," Ayala said. "Here I couldn't earn $1,000 in a year."

With his U.S. earnings he was able to buy his family a two-story house for $2,500 and have money left over to bring back American clothes and acquire a gold crucifix that he wears on a chain around his neck—all status symbols that give a young man prestige in Tarimbaro. His mother now uses a street-level corner of the house for her small business of grinding corn for tortilla batter.

"Things are tough in Chicago now, but life is hard here, too," Ayala said. Asked what he would do if he cannot get another job in the United States, he shrugged and said he would have to come back here and take up farming.

Indeed, if Chicago is dead now for these young Mexicans, Tarimbaro is not too lively either.

Two blocks away from Ayala's house is the town plaza, the hub of what little activity there is in Tarimbaro on a given

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day. It is a place where skinny dogs sleep in the streets, and men in straw hats ride burros past vendors selling fruit and trinkets on the sidewalk in front of the town's church.

For diversion, or just lunch, there is the Loncheria Lucy, which features a video game in one corner. Another store, owned by the family of a former illegal alien, sells homemade popsicles and has five tables of a soccer game called *futbolitos*.

"Work here is very scarce," said Anaberta Ruiz, a social worker at Tarimbaro's secondary school. "And it usually doesn't pay the minimum wage." Of the 400 students in the school, she said, "no more than 5 to 10 percent go on to higher studies. The others work on their plot of land, or don't do anything."

According to the Rev. Jose Flores Gamino, this town's 60-year-old Roman Catholic priest, some undocumented workers who have returned recently for Tarimbaro's annual carnival report widespread nervousness among their fellow illegal aliens about their future in the United States.

"Some recount that their bosses are going to fire them," Flores said. "Most are just waiting." He added, "If they come back here, there will be big problems. We're hoping they don't."

Flores estimated that in this town of 5,000 people, "about 50 percent of the houses have people up north." Thousands of townspeople have made the trip over the years, earning money to build new houses here, he said.

"If it ends, it will be something very serious, certainly," Flores said. "We're going to have people around here who can't find work, and they'll end up as loafers, or maybe even robbers."

resource card #3

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

A FLOOD OF IMMIGRATION WOULD BE CUT SHARPLY BY FREER FLOW OF TRADE
By Cesar V. Conda
Source: *The San Diego Union–Tribune*, September 19, 1993.

Opponents of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have added illegal immigration to the list of supposed threats to the American way of life that would result from freer trade between the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

The opening salvo was fired by conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan who charged in a recent column that "NAFTA is the economic equivalent of 40 million Mexicans, whose average wage is $60 a week, pouring across the border to compete for American jobs." The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), an anti-immigration group, has joined the anti-NAFTA chorus, asserting that "Mexican workers will flood into the U.S. and Canadian labor markets." The Sierra Club claims that NAFTA-related immigration will cause a population explosion harmful to the environment.

These critics couldn't be more wrong; NAFTA is, in fact, a long-term remedy to the problem of illegal Mexican immigration into the United States.

People leave Mexico for one simple reason: lack of opportunity. The dual forces of "supply-push"—low wages and scarcity of jobs in Mexico—and "demand-pull"—relatively higher wages and the abundance of low-skilled, entry-level jobs in the United States—have propelled millions of Mexicans north of the border. The only way to diminish these migratory pressures is to promote economic growth, new and better jobs, and rising wage rates in Mexico. NAFTA would accomplish each of these goals by stimulating a Mexican trade and investment boom. Consider these estimates by the Washington-based Institute for International Economics:

- Economic growth rates in Mexico under the free trade pact could reach as high as 6 percent a year over the next decade.

- This economic expansion will produce an estimated 600,000 new jobs in Mexico over the next ten years, adding 2 percent to total Mexican employment. Mexican wages could rise as much as 16 percent over the next several years.

Indeed, historical evidence suggests a significant inverse relationship between the rate of economic growth in Mexico and migratory pressures as measured by the number of apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Between 1978 and 1981, annual real growth in Mexico averaged a healthy 8.8 percent and, as a result, border apprehensions dropped from a high of 1 million in 1979 to about 840,000 in 1980-81. During 1982-83, the worldwide recession and commodity price deflation led to a collapse of the Mexican economy, sending border apprehensions back up to 1.2 million in 1983. While the Mexican economy recovered somewhat in 1984, it nosedived again in 1986 and apprehensions soared to a record 1.7 million that year.

The message is clear: A stronger Mexican economy encourages Mexicans to stay at home. And, as the bipartisan Immigration Reform Commission created by Congress in 1990 concluded, "expanded trade between the sending countries and the U.S. is the single most important long-run remedy to the problem."

In the short-term, however, NAFTA is likely to have what international trade economists refer to as the "J-curve effect"

on Mexico-to-U.S. migration, initially increasing and subsequently decreasing it. Opening certain import-sensitive Mexican agricultural markets to U.S. growers would displace thousands of rural Mexican workers, many of whom would migrate to the United States for jobs. However, a study done for the World Bank by Levy and Van Winbergen predicts a net labor release of only 145,000 rural workers out of a total rural work force of 6 million because NAFTA phases in the tariff reductions for Mexican corn and beans over 15 years. And as the market-oriented reforms of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari take hold and the economy moves into higher gear under NAFTA, these displaced workers would soon be reemployed in new, productive, private sector jobs in Mexico.

The critics argue, however, that Mexicans will continue to seek jobs in the United States because it will take years, perhaps decades, for NAFTA to close the current gap in wage rates between the two nations. But, as the experience of free trade in Europe demonstrates, wage rates in an immigrant-sending country must simply rise in relation to, and not necessarily equalize with, that of the immigrant-recipient country in order to convince people to stay home.

Despite the Clinton administration's recent victory in breaking the stalemate over NAFTA's labor and environmental side accords, the agreement still faces a hostile U.S. Congress. Linking NAFTA to the public's growing hysteria over immigration makes the task of approving the trade agreement much more difficult.

In the final analysis, if NAFTA is killed in the Congress, the so-called immigration problem would likely become a national crisis. A weakened Mexican economy could send several million immigrants across the border, double or triple the current rate. Billions of investment dollars would flee from Mexico as investors sought higher rates of return in other countries with growing economies and stable, democratic governments.

Two salient events should forewarn us of the potential economic danger of rejecting NAFTA.

When Ross Perot, the nation's leading anti-NAFTA propagandist, emerged in the polls in June 1992 as a viable candidate for president, the value of Mexican equities listed in New York tumbled 10 percent in five days, and only recovered when Perot withdrew from the race.

More recently, Budget Director Leon Panetta's statement that NAFTA was "dead" triggered the year's second-largest plunge in the Mexican stock market.

Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J., perhaps put it best when he said: "If NAFTA is rejected, there will be the immediate problem of $40 billion in flight capital leaving Mexico in a matter of weeks . . . there will be a setback for democracy and we will have a long-term problem on our border, so much so that it could become a national security issue."

Moreover, without NAFTA, there will be no side agreements to improve environmental and labor conditions along the U.S.-Mexico border.

NAFTA addresses the immigration problem in a positive manner, a sharp contrast to the migrant bashing now in fashion. NAFTA offers a positive-sum approach that would stimulate economic growth on both sides of the border. In time, it would help millions of Mexicans achieve a better life on their side of the border.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

DAVIS WON'T FOLLOW PROPOSITION 187 ON SCHOOLS; POLITICS: GOVERNOR VOWS NOT TO IMPLEMENT PROVISION THAT WOULD DENY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT CHILDREN ACCESS TO PUBLIC EDUCATION; CRITICS SAY HE'S BETRAYING HIS OATH.

By Dave Lesher, *Los Angeles Times* Staff Writer
Source: *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1999. Reprinted with permission.

Taking a major step toward resolution of the Proposition 187 controversy, Gov. Gray Davis said Thursday he will not implement a key provision of the measure that would deny illegal immigrant children access to California public schools.

"I personally will never be a party to an effort to kick kids out of school," Davis said in an interview with *The Times*, where he was joined by Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo on the third day of a joint goodwill tour around California.

"I will never allow California to take that position if it is within my power to prevent it—and I believe that it is," Davis added.

The 1994 ballot measure could force hundreds of thousands of children out of public school if it overturns a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court precedent—as its original sponsors intended.

The landmark initiative, which altered California's political landscape and strained relations with Mexico, may ultimately have a relatively modest impact on state policy because the provisions of the initiative removing health and welfare benefits from illegal immigrants are already covered by federal law.

"We are very pleased," said Thomas Saenz, attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuits against Proposition 187. "It is a great thing if he formally decides to drop the appeal on the education section . . . the most important section, no question about it."

Proposition 187—including the section regarding public education—was declared largely unconstitutional last year by U.S. District Judge Mariana Pfaelzer. That ruling was appealed by then-Gov. Pete Wilson, a primary sponsor of the initiative.

Davis, who opposed Proposition 187, inherited the appeal and was urged by many of his allies to drop the lawsuit and probably end any chance the measure would ever be implemented.

But Davis said that would disregard the 60 percent of California voters who passed the initiative. So last month he announced what he called a "middle path," seeking mediation of the matter to satisfy opponents of the measure as well as voters who supported it.

The mediation is described as a bargaining session in which Davis will present a modified version of the proposition and then negotiate an agreement with representatives from several civil rights and immigrant advocate groups that are plaintiffs in the suit. As the defendant in the case, officials say, the governor has authority to pursue all or none of the initiative.

Attack by Measure's Authors

On Thursday, the original authors of Proposition 187 blasted Davis for suggesting that he could fulfill the will of the voters at the same time he plans to ignore a major provision of the initiative.

"The governor is showing a tremendous amount of disrespect for the voters of this state if he decides to carve out the portions of Proposition 187 that he likes

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politically, and that he doesn't like politically," said Sharon Browne, an attorney representing the initiative's authors. "He is letting us down on the oath of office that he took and on his promise to the people that he would uphold the law."

The proposition's authors are not parties to the lawsuit. At the time voters passed it, the legal defense was turned over to Wilson and former Atty. Gen. Dan Lungren, both Republicans who backed the measure.

When Davis announced his plans for a mediated settlement, he promised to seek their input.

Earlier this month, an attorney for the governor met privately with Browne and other lawyers who outlined their arguments for ending public education benefits for illegal immigrants. But when the meeting was over, Browne and other supporters criticized the governor's effort as insincere.

Davis has been assuring opponents of Proposition 187 privately that he will not pursue the most controversial elements of the ballot measure—such as limits on access to public education.

The private talks have allowed key Latino leaders in the Legislature to express confidence in the governor's plan for mediation. Davis gave a similar assurance to Zedillo, who asked about the controversial issue during his three-day tour.

"I have received the commitment of the governor to do whatever he can, so the negative effects that this proposition could generate . . . should not materialize," Zedillo said in a television interview Wednesday. "I have confidence in the governor."

Davis has received approval from the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to start negotiations over Proposition 187's fate with several civil rights groups and immigration advocates who are plaintiffs in the case against it.

Solution Expected in a Few Months

The mediation process is intended to determine what parts of Proposition 187, if any, should be appealed, implemented or dropped.

An optimistic Davis, seated next to Zedillo, said Thursday that he expects to announce a conclusion of the mediation within three or four months.

He said federal laws and court decisions—specifically on public education—since Proposition 187 was passed provide "the grounds for a resolution of this issue."

"I am convinced that this matter can be resolved definitively within three or four months, and we will be able to put a very divisive wedge issue behind us," he said.

Other parties to the suit said important issues still remain to be resolved, although they agreed that Davis' comments about public education remove the largest hurdle to agreement.

Most health and welfare benefits targeted by Proposition 187 had already been denied to illegal immigrants since 1996, when President Clinton signed a federal welfare reform bill. Plaintiffs in the mediation said some negotiation is still required, however, because the federal law does not block the state from providing services to illegal immigrants at its own cost. Proposition 187 would block that.

Plaintiffs cited prenatal care for illegal immigrants as an example of a state-funded program that is allowed under federal law but would be prohibited by Proposition 187.

The other issues to be negotiated include illegal immigrants' access to California colleges and universities. Pfaelzer ruled that Proposition 187 could not limit access to higher education.

She also ruled against a provision of the measure regarding whether local and state police should be involved in apprehending illegal immigrants—currently a federal responsibility.

"We are not prepared to compromise the decision Judge Pfaelzer correctly applied," Saenz said. "This is an important step on public education , but it is just one step."

The federal district court upheld one provision of Proposition 187 that increases penalties for those who use fraudulent documents to immigrate illegally. That decision has been appealed by opponents of Proposition 187, but some have suggested that they could compromise on the matter.

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MIGRADOLLARS

BACKGROUND

"Migradollars" is an expression used to describe the money sent by immigrants to their families back home. People send migradollars in a variety of ways. One option is to do a wire transfer by going to a company such as MoneyGram or Western Union. The company charges them a fee for sending a certain amount of money. Another option is to send money orders or personal checks. Most of the estimated 6 million Mexicans who live and work in the United States send money to Mexico.

Money sent from abroad is crucial for many communities in Mexico. For many families, this money is their only source of income. Mexico's central bank has estimated that more than $6 billion was sent to Mexico from the United States in 1998, making migradollars the third- or fourth-largest source of foreign revenue for Mexico after oil, tourism, and possibly manufactured goods.

INSTRUCTIONS

As a group, read the newspaper articles about the businesses that wire money to Mexico. Answer the questions before beginning to work on the group task.

1. What are some of the problems people encounter in sending money back home?

2. How do migradollars impact communities in Mexico and the United States? How do they impact each country as a whole?

3. Discuss the importance of migradollars in U.S.–Mexico relations.

GROUP TASK

Your group wants to open a business that will provide services to immigrants. One of the services will be sending money. Create an advertisement campaign to promote your business. Think about the language(s) used in the campaign, images and symbols, and where the business would advertise.

resource card #1

MIGRADOLLARS

EXPENSIVE EXCHANGES; LATINOS LAMENTING COSTS OF WIRING CASH; BUT FIRMS SAY FEES ARE DRIVEN BY MARKET

By Jenalia Moreno

Source: © 1999, *The Houston Chronicle*, Houston Chronicle Publishing Company, July 21, 1999. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

Tejano music and the smell of sizzling fajitas from nearby taquerias waft through the doorways of bus stations, post offices and grocery stores.

Drawn inside by signs in Spanish announcing that these establishments specialize in "giros," or money-wiring, customers fill out their money-transfer forms.

It's a service thousands of Houston's Mexicans and Mexican-Americans eagerly seek out each day to send parts of their paychecks home to relatives in Mexico.

It's also a service the restaurants, grocery stores and bus stations that dot the landscape of the city's predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods—many located along Harrisburg in southeast Houston or on Main Street on Houston's so-called Northside—are eager to offer.

The service not only draws in business, it also makes money for the establishments.

But some customers complain that these businesses overcharge and don't inform them about the daily exchange rate of the dollar to the Mexican peso.

They've complained enough that officials on both sides of the border have taken notice and are taking steps to force the companies to provide greater information about exchange rates and fees.

"It lends itself to abuse," said Romero Flores Caballero, the national coordinator for Mexico's program for "paisanos"—Mexicans living in the United States.

He contends that such abuses include high commissions and currency exchange rates that exceed the daily rate. Each company charges different fees for its services. That creates confusion for customers, Flores said.

The "giros" service is such a giant industry in cities such as Houston that Mexican government officials estimate more than 10 million paisanos send $5 billion home annually.

After oil, tourism and manufacturing, it's one of Mexico's biggest sources of revenues, said Rodolfo Farias, a legal Mexican immigrant who has lived in Houston for 30 years. He sends money home to his brother in Mexico City as often as he can to pay for a house he owns there.

Part of the Mexican government's plan to reduce this confusion includes setting up a Web site that details each company's exchange rate, commission, services, and delivery time.

The chart will be located at the Consul General of Houston's Web site at www.Mexico-info.com. It will show how many pesos or dollars a family will receive in Mexico after the commission has been deducted and the exchange rate calculated.

The chart, already available at the Consul General's offices in Dallas, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Miami, will be available for companies with services in Houston shortly, Flores promised. Paisanos can call 877-868-8722 toll-free for more information about the money-wiring comparison chart.

The problem also has attracted the attention of U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., who authored a bill last year that called for additional disclosures of exchange rates and commissions charged for international transactions.

The bill, now in the Banking and Financial Services Committee, has the support of the entire Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said Billy Weinberg, Gutierrez's press secretary in Washington.

Gutierrez received plenty of complaints from his constituents, who urged him to do something about currency conversion schemes, Weinberg said.

"In the Mexican-American market, they have a captive audience," Weinberg said in reference to the money-wiring operations here. "They realize they can take advantage of that community to a certain respect."

Just two months ago, MoneyGram and Western Union agreed to pay $300,000 and $2 million, respectively, for allegedly charging high fees to wire money from Texas and Illinois to Mexico. The money goes to charitable Hispanic organizations. A similar lawsuit in California is pending.

The companies agreed to offer coupons to customers who wired money to Mexico since 1983 and to disclose fees and foreign exchange rates on advertising to the Mexican market.

"We've always been comfortable with the way that we disclosed our fees," said Pete Ziverts, spokesman for Western Union in Englewood, Colo., commenting on the settlement.

Yet, many Mexicans still have plenty of complaints about Western Union's fees.

"The one that takes you to the cleaners is Western Union," said Blanca Estella Guardiola, who was sending money home to her mother in Monterrey from Adame. "It's too much what they take out."

Farias, who attended a public hearing about the "paisano" program at the Consul General's office, also complained about the company.

After sending money to his family, he realized that they received far fewer pesos than the amount on his receipt because of the currency exchange rate the company used.

Now, he sends money via the U.S. Post Office, even though the fee is slightly higher than that charged at Western Union.

"It's better because you know that your family is going to receive the amount you're sending to them," said Farias, who holds down several jobs, including a banquet organizer.

Farias said the Mexican and U.S. governments should do something to control this industry, but money-wiring service officials oppose any more regulation.

"We feel that the free enterprise system—it tells us that the market will regulate itself," said Nancy Dedera, spokeswoman for Denver-based MoneyGram.

Ziverts, of Western Union, agreed that the market sets the price and that companies must report all transactions of more than $10,000.

"It's important to understand that the money transfer business is already heavily regulated in the United States," Ziverts said.

Autobuses Adame, a local bus operator on Telephone Road, also offers a money-wiring service.

About 80 percent of this business comes from Mexican customers, said Jose Luis Cano, who heads up the company's money-wiring service.

resource card #1

Cano said any additional regulations would not cause any problems for his business. "We will get whatever permits we need," Cano said.

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MIGRADOLLARS

SENDING MONEY HOME ISN'T CHEAP; IMMIGRANTS LEARN THEFTS, EXCHANGE RATES, AND AGENTS' FEES EAT INTO FUNDS

By Georgia Pabst

Source: *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 6, 1999.

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Jose Avina used to wire money from Milwaukee through MoneyGram to his aging parents, who live on a small farm in León, Mexico. But by the time the money reached them, the amount had shrunk—eaten away by unfavorable exchange rates.

"We would send $500, but by the time they received it, it would be $450," said Avina's wife, Ninfa.

And then there were actual wiring costs, which vary depending on the amount sent and how quickly it is delivered. For example, MoneyGram charges $50 for next-day delivery of $1,000 to Mexico.

Avina, who works in an automotive parts factory in Cedarburg, said he grew tired of seeing the money virtually disappear, so he switched to buying money orders and sending them through the U.S. Postal Service via Express Mail. Even that proved risky: Two money orders he bought were lost.

As the Hispanic population grows in Milwaukee and the rest of the country, the business of sending money to Mexico is increasing, and along with it questions and concerns about fees and exchange rates.

Just on a three-block stretch of S. Chavez Drive—from W. National Ave. to W. Washington St.—money-sending services are available in five stores or free-standing offices. And throughout Milwaukee's south side, in small and large grocery stores, bakeries and even a Tejano western-wear store, money-sending services have become as plentiful as chips and salsa.

With names such as Mexico Express, Transfer Net, and Envio Express—along with old standbys Western Union and MoneyGram—they promise fast, safe service to customers eager to send their earnings south of the border.

While the Avinas shopped around for the best deal for sending money, many other consumers aren't as vigilant, said Filberto Murguia, executive director of the Council for the Spanish Speaking.

Murguia's agency works with Latinos on a variety of issues, including problems with money-transfer services.

"People are willing to pay, and nobody questions it or asks about additional fees or commissions charged in Mexico," said Murguia. "It's a big, big business, and millions of dollars are sent back to Mexico, but a lot of people don't know what happens on the other side."

Nationally, immigrants send nearly $5 billion a year to Mexico—the fourth-largest source of income in Mexico behind manufactured goods, oil and tourism, said U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Chicago).

Last year, and again this year, Gutierrez introduced legislation calling for more disclosures on fees, commissions, and exchange rates—at least on the American side of the equation. His proposal was backed by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and by U.S. Rep. Tom Barrett (D-Milwaukee), who signed on as a co-sponsor of the proposal.

Because of consumer complaints, the Mexican government also is taking steps: Last year, it launched a campaign in Los

Angeles and Chicago to make sure the cash sent across the border doesn't slip away in extra fees and commissions. The campaign featured a toll-free number for consumers to call with concerns.

Gutierrez also wants the exchange rate for money transfers to match the rate charged to large companies doing business in Mexico. Big companies currently get a more favorable exchange rate than is available to individual consumers.

In Wisconsin, there are no limits on fees charged by money-transfer companies, said Lisa Roys, the director of communications for the state Department of Financial Institutions.

For example, Rosa Gil is a widow who works for $5 an hour as a hotel maid in Milwaukee. She takes the $200 to $300 that she saves every month or so to a south side MoneyGram store, where she sends the money to her three children in Mexico. To transfer $200, MoneyGram charges her $10—but that fee could vary from $8 to $20 depending on where she took her money.

State figures on the number of money-wiring outlets are difficult to pinpoint. But the 330 Western Union agents and 90 MoneyGram agents in Wisconsin account for a sizable chunk. Nationally, the two companies process about 80 percent of all wire transfers to Mexico.

The costs of sending money to Mexico caught the spotlight in 1997 when class-action lawsuits were filed in Illinois, Texas and California against Western Union and MoneyGram.

The lawsuits accused the companies of false advertising and consumer fraud, alleging that they charged hundreds of millions of dollars in hidden fees. Western Union is owned by First Data Corp.; MoneyGram once was owned by First Data but now is part of Travelers Express, a subsidiary of Viad Corp.

In May, the two companies announced a settlement of the lawsuits. The settlement is expected to be approved in November. Under the proposed settlement, Western Union would offer millions of dollars worth of discount coupons to people who used the service as long ago as 1987, said Peter Ziverts, vice president of corporate communications for Western Union. Details on how the refunds would be distributed are still being worked out, Ziverts said.

MoneyGram would give coupons to people who used its services since December 18, 1996—the date MoneyGram separated from First Data.

In addition, the two companies have agreed to contribute $2.3 million to Latino community organizations in the United States—$2 million from Western Union and $300,000 from MoneyGram.

The third part of the settlement calls for the companies to change the way they communicate their fees in advertisements and during transactions, Ziverts said.

The companies, in turn, admit no wrongdoing.

"Western Union has been proven guilty of nothing," Ziverts said. "The fact that Western Union money transfer business continues to grow is our belief consumers continue to use it because they trust it and find value in service."

He added: "This has become an intensely competitive business."

And about to get more competitive.

The Postal Service is getting into the act with its new Dinero Seguro (Sure Money) electronic money-transfer service.

The Postal Service is testing Dinero Seguro in California, Texas, and the Chicago area.

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For years, the Postal Service has sent money orders to Mexico. It's a hefty business—about 70 percent of all money orders go there. But the instant electronic transfer of money to Bancomer, a retail bank in Mexico, holds the promise of better service, said Maria Pell, product manager for new business development at the Postal Service in Washington.

Still, in cities like Milwaukee, many people still send postal money orders to Mexico through the mail—a problematic method, said community worker Daniel Soto, a community worker at the Council for the Spanish Speaking.

In May 1998, Jose Avina bought two money orders from Cashland Check Cashing at S. 8th and W. Mitchell streets—one for $1,000 and another for $500. It was money that Avina and his brother and sister had pooled together to send to their parents.

When the money orders never arrived, Cashland put a stop payment on the $500 order and refunded Avina's money. But the $1,000 money order had been cashed in Phoenix, apparently by another party, a stub shows.

Both Cashland and the Postal Service say they are investigating, Avina said. The Postal Service refunded the $15 Express Mail fee, but that's all, he said.

Soto said many clients have complained to the Council for the Spanish Speaking about similar situations. And Pell, of the Postal Service, said there are many problems with theft and loss of mailed money orders, both inside and outside Mexico.

Postal officials have been meeting with representatives of the banking industry and foreign exchange companies to try to develop a standard here and in Mexico for cashing money orders, Pell said.

At present, none exists—and that's a problem, she said. Hopes at the Postal Service are high, she said, that the new electronic system will work more smoothly.

MIGRADOLLARS

CALIFORNIA; LATINOS BALK AT OFFER IN MONEY-WIRING SUIT; LAW: STATE SEN. POLANCO SAYS HE NEEDS TIME TO HEAR CONCERNS AMID CRITICISM OF DEAL HE HELPED BROKER

By Lee Romney

Source: © 1999, *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 1999. Reprinted by permission.

Support among California Latino leaders was crumbling Tuesday for an enhanced settlement to a federal class-action lawsuit alleging three money-wiring companies charged immigrants steep hidden costs to send money to Mexico.

State Sen. Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles), who helped broker the deal with Western Union, MoneyGram, and Orlandi Valuta, opted out of a scheduled news conference in the 11th hour after a coalition of Latino groups accused him of selling out and betraying his constituents.

Polanco now says he needs more time to study the offer and listen to community concerns, including those of Hermandad Mexicana Nacional. The immigrant rights group's leaders are longtime allies of Polanco but fiercely criticized his role in the deal.

"The senator . . . is not prepared to take a position, mainly because he's hearing from people who are friends of his in the community," said chief aide Bill Mabie.

The deal was announced amid fanfare in Houston and Chicago on Tuesday but was disclosed in Los Angeles in a private office under threat of demonstrations by Hermandad.

The offer sweetens a national settlement announced by the companies in May and negotiated by plaintiffs' lawyers in Chicago. It would double the amount of money the companies donate to Latino community causes to $4.6 million, and create a nonprofit Latino community development fund financed by a percentage of the $4 billion wired to Mexico yearly, officials announced Tuesday. The companies would set up and advertise the fund, but the money diverted to it would come from the pockets of consumers.

The companies have also agreed to support legislation to make some settlement concessions permanent in California. The core of the deal—which offers discount coupons on future transactions to customers who wired money to Mexico since 1987—remains unchanged. A federal judge in Illinois is expected to issue a final ruling on the settlement Dec. 10.

"Given what we have to work with, I think it's . . . terrific," said Chicago attorney Matthew J. Piers, who negotiated the deal and flew to Los Angeles before learning Polanco had pulled out.

The legal case against the companies was not a slam-dunk, he added.

While a lack of support from key California legislators could delay implementation of the settlement, Piers said this won't derail it. Piers on Tuesday counted four California assembly members as supporters. But three congressmen from the Southland still oppose the deal. Polanco's support was viewed as key since he brokered it.

The initial offer, which received preliminary approval from a federal judge in May, froze all similar class-action lawsuits, including three in California. However, plaintiffs are free to opt out of the settlement and form a new class to pursue litigation.

The federal and other lawsuits allege fraud and false advertising because the companies do not disclose to customers

that they are being charged exchange rates that are much less favorable than prevailing rates. The companies have agreed to post signs reminding customers to inquire about the rate they are getting, but maintain that they are not required to reveal the spread.

Los Angeles attorney J. Fred Kumetz, who represents plaintiffs here and helped from the opponents' coalition, said a coupon-based settlement is flawed because it forces victims to give repeat business to the companies and compensates community groups instead.

"The enhancement is an effort . . . to buy politicians with benefits that do not go to the victims but instead go to the politicians' favorite causes," he said.

Polanco was among California legislators who several months ago blasted the deal. But in recent months, he and Assemblyman Marco Firebaugh worked to broker the enhancement.

activity card

MEXICAN RETABLOS

BACKGROUND

Retablos are colorful votive paintings on sheets of tin that tell the story of a dangerous or threatening event from which the author of the retablo has been saved through the intervention of a religious figure. Originally, retablos were paintings or sculptures that decorated the altars of churches. Retablos were also small boxes inside of which were painted panels of religious scenes. In New Spain (now Mexico), wealthy families had their own retablos painted so that they could worship at home. Well-known artists such as Frida Kahlo have used the "retablo-style" in their works. Diego Rivera once said, "Retablos are the one true and present pictorial expression of the Mexican people."

Retablos and other religious images are commonly used by Mexican immigrants to the United States to offer thanks to a divine image. In the artwork and writings, they express feelings of leaving their family and country, fears of a new place, and wishes for safe crossings. They are a good source of information about Mexican immigration as they capture events just as they were experienced by the immigrants themselves.

INSTRUCTIONS

As a group, examine the images of the retablos dedicated by immigrants or families of immigrants. Read the inscriptions and analyze the images. Answer the questions before beginning the group task.

1. What feelings are expressed in these retablos?

2. What are some of the themes expressed in these images?

3. According to these retablos, how do you think immigration impacts families in Mexico? How does immigration impact people in the United States? Finally, how does immigration impact the relations between the United States and Mexico?

GROUP TASK

As a group, create two retablos, one illustrating the impact of immigration on the United States and the other showing the impact on Mexico. Remember that a retablo typically consists of the following:

- A divine image, depicted in picture form
- Picture of the miraculous event
- Text, usually at the bottom of the retablo, expressing gratitude to the holy image and often stating the place of origin of the author along with the date, place, and circumstances of the event. It also typically describes the miraculous intervention of the religious figure that "saved" the author.

Include some of the ideas presented in the retablos you analyzed in this activity.

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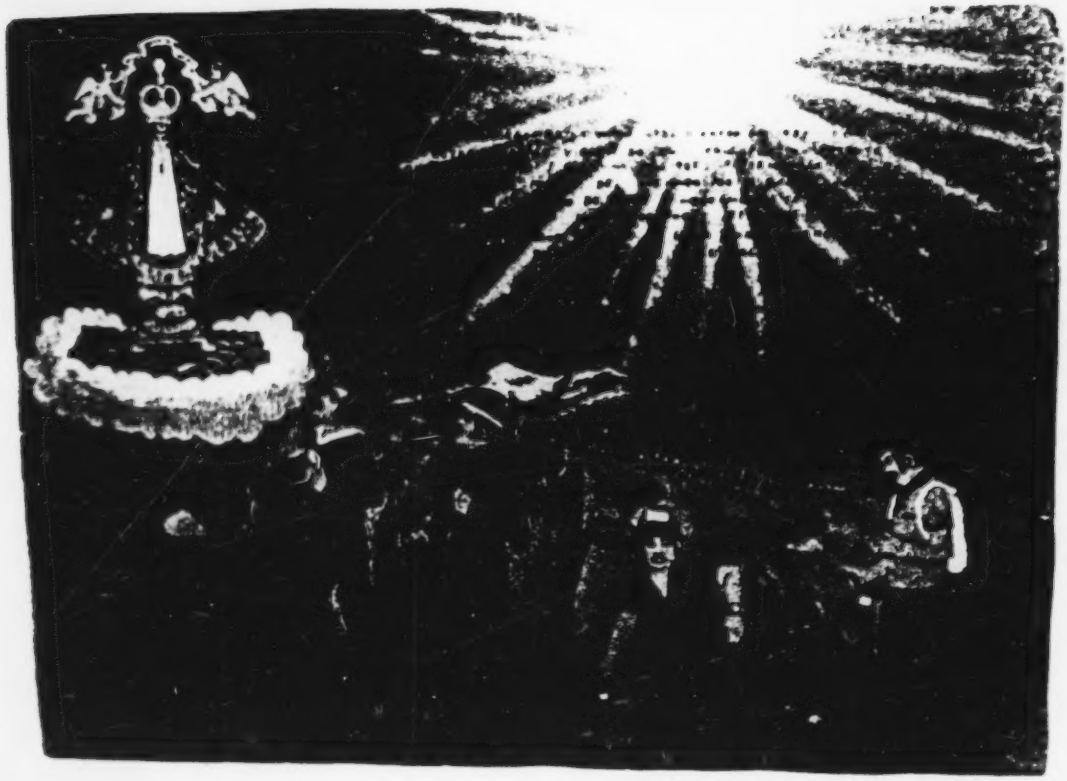
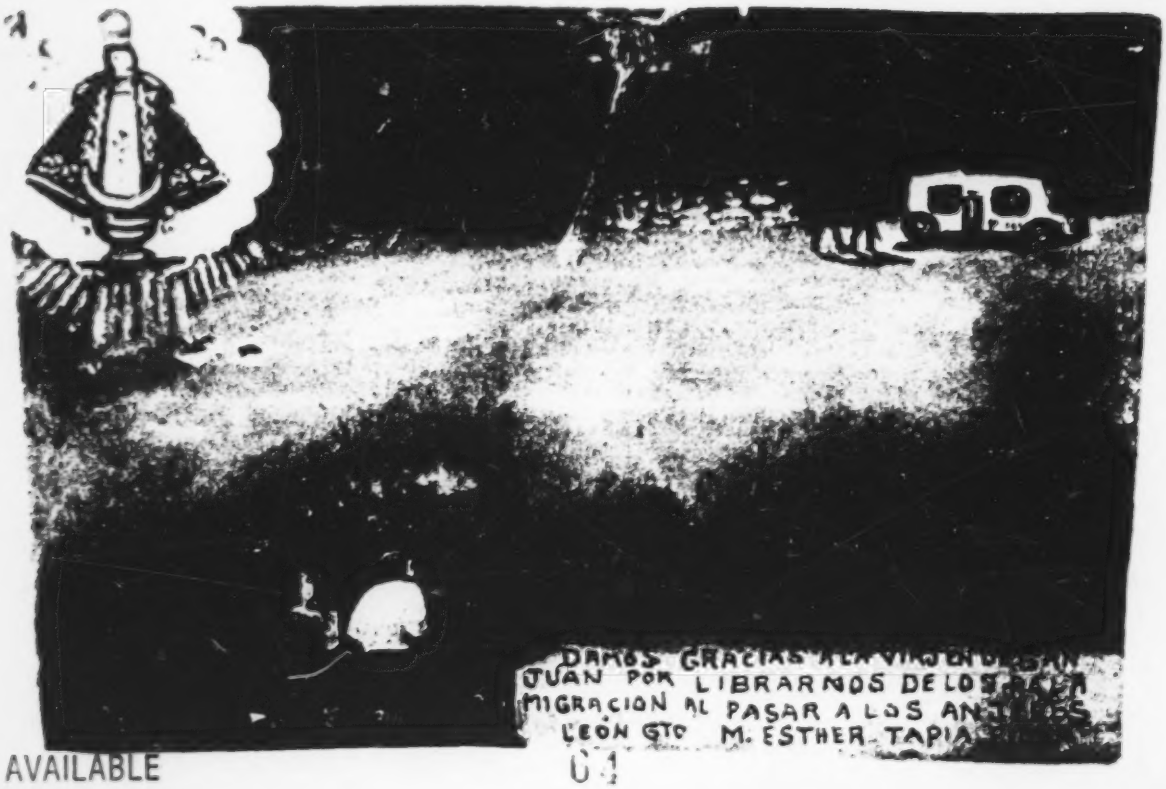
1. Retablo of Braulio Barrientos



2. Retablo of M. Esther Tapia Picon



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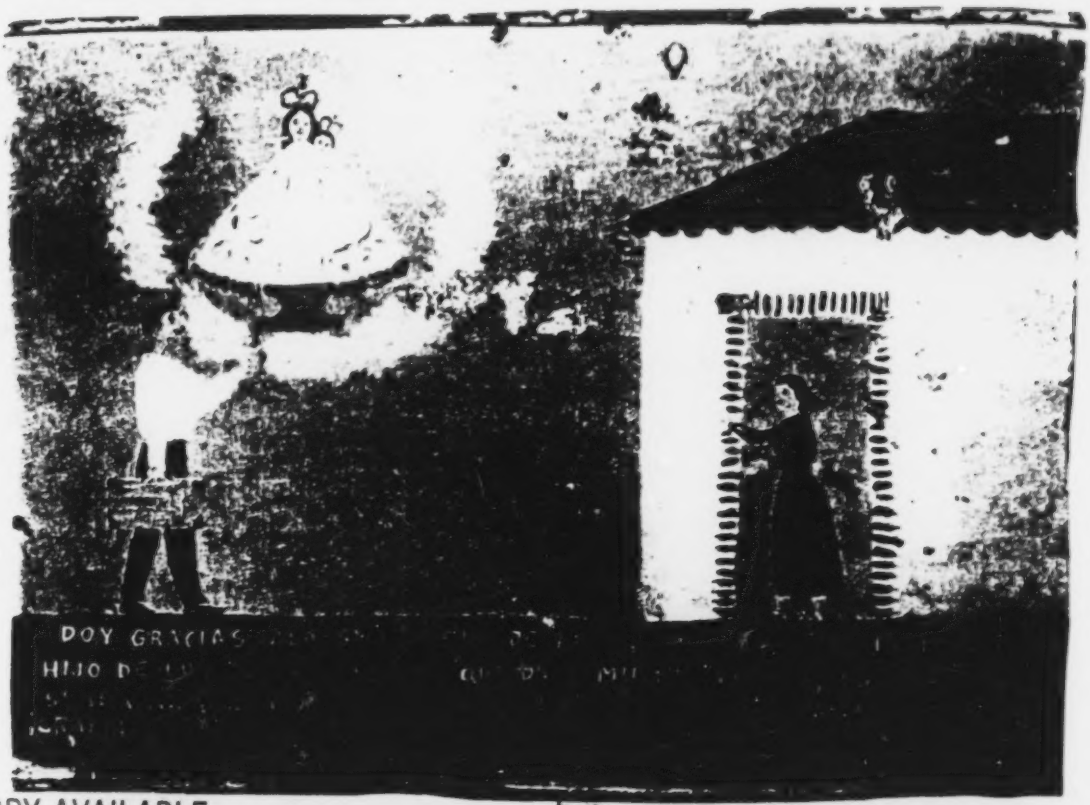
3. Retablo of Senovio Trejo

4. Retablo of Candelaria Arreola



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MEXICAN RETABLOS

1. Retablo of Braulio Barrientos

Rancho Palencia. San Diego de la Unión, Guanajuato. 11 Enero de 1986. Con esta fecha dedico este retablo a la Virgen de San Juan por tan patenete milagro que nos consedió ya que con fecha 5 de Junio de 1986 al remigrar a E. U. con 3 compañeros se nos terminó el agua que llevamos siendo me el camino con el fuerte calor y la sed sin esperanzas de tomar un poco de agua. Invocamos a la Sma. Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos y logramos llegar a nuestro destino y regresar a nuestra patria con salud. En eterno agradecimiento desde el lugar donde se encuentre Braulio Barrientos a la Sma. Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos Jalisco.

Rancho Palencia, San Diego de la Unión, Guanajuato. January 11, 1986. On this date I dedicate the present retablo to the Virgin of San Juan for the clear miracle she granted on the date of June 5, 1986. Re-emigrating to the United States with three friends, the water we were carrying ran out. Traveling in such great heat and with such thirst, and without hope of drinking even a little water, we invoked the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos and were able to arrive at our destination and return to our homeland in health. In eternal gratitude to the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos from the place where you find Braulio Barrientos.

2. Retablo of M. Esther Tapia Picón

Damos gracias a la virgen de San Juan por librarnos de los de la migración al pasar a Los Anjeles. León, Guanajuato. María Esther Tapia Picón.

We give thanks to the Virgin of San Juan for saving us from the migration authorities on our way to Los Angeles. León, Guanajuato. María Esther Tapia Picón.

Source: Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, *Miracles on the Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1995). Reprinted with permission.

MEXICAN RETABLOS

3. Retablo of Senovio Trejo

Encontrándome en Estados Unidos trabajando en el algodón y al transportarnos de un lado a tros se nos desconpurso el carro chocando en un poste de la luz. El cual me pegó en el serebro viéndome en tan grande peligro lejos de mi patria y de mi familia. Me encomendé de todo mi corazón a San Miguelito. León, Guanajuato. Senovio Trejo.

While in the United States working in the cotton fields, I was moving from place to place when the car broke down and crashed into a light post. It struck me on the head and put me in very great danger far from my homeland and my family. I entrusted myself with all my heart to San Miguelito. León, Guanajuato. Senovio Trejo.

4. Retablo of Candelaria Arreola

Doy Gracias a la Sma. Virgen de Talpa por haberme traído a mi hijo de Estados Unidos que duró much tiempo, empecé a resar su novena y aun no le terminaba cuando regresó. ¡Gracias madre mía! El Grullo, Jalisco. 1955. Candelaria Arreola.

I give thanks to the Holiest Virgin of Talpa for having brought my son home from the United States, where he stayed for a long time. I began to pray your novena and I hadn't even finished when he returned. Thank you, my Mother! El Grullo, Jalisco. 1955. Candelaria Arreola.

Source: Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, *Miracles on the Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1995). Reprinted with permission.

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THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

BACKGROUND

Historically, the U.S. census had no official way of identifying Mexican-Americans as a specific group of residents in the United States. In fact, Americans of Mexican descent have been called by various terms, including Hispanics, Latinos, Hispanos, Mexicanos, Mexican-Americans, and Chicanos. Though there is no single term that reflects the subtle differences among all of these terms, the term, Mexican-American, is used commonly to identify the group.

Since the Mexican–American War of 1846–1848, Mexican-Americans have struggled to achieve equality and gain full rights as citizens of the United States. Some of the major events that have shaped Mexican-American history in the last 30 years include the Mexican-American civil rights movement (1965–1975) and a 1968 school boycott by thousands of Mexican-American high school students in East Los Angeles.

In studying Mexican-American heritage, one can look toward cultural representations by Mexican-American artists and writers to better understand the Mexican-American experience. For example, the cultural elements of immigration are frequently explored in Mexican-American art and literature. Often, these disciplines use common themes of boundaries, resistance, affirmation, and identity to reveal the Mexican-American experience.

INSTRUCTIONS

As a group, examine the poetry, literature, murals, and oral histories by Mexican-Americans.

1. What feelings are expressed in the poetry, literature, murals, and oral histories?
    - Are there any common themes that run throughout them? If so, what are they?
    - Do you think murals are useful in expressing oneself? Why or why not?
    - In what ways has the Mexican-American experience affected American culture?
2. In the context of immigration, how do culture and issues of identity influence U.S.–Mexico relations? (Consider this question at a more individual level. For example, how would a Mexican-American legislator react to political developments between the United States and Mexico?)

GROUP TASK

Choose one of the following tasks to complete. Be sure to include the themes you studied in the Mexican-American writings and murals.

a. Create a readers' theater.
b. Design a mural.
c. Develop an illustrated community newspaper.
d. Write an oral documentary with interviews.

resource card #1: poetry

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Undocumented Love
by José Antonio Burciaga

Through Time and Space

Calendar leaves
will flap their memory wings
to anoint the wounds
of unbridled immigrants
with the joyous feasts of santos.

This I will tell you!
A full moon will caress
their passage to the promised land
through the barbed wire of humor.

Smelter Town
is Imelda,

Villa Ahumada,
Smoky Village,

El Paso
Is Ellis Island,

Waco is Hueco
as in hollow,

Las Cruces,
triple jeopardy,

El Río Grande,
el Río Bravo.

Truth or Consequences,
a desert mirage.

And the "American way of life"
is the trek from Centroamérica
to el Norte.

To Mexico with Love

Mother country who accused
your children without reason
being you the occasion
I want you to remember:

That we are children forgotten,
children of revolutionaries,
children of the exiled,
children of wetbacks,
children of braceros,
children of farmworkers,
children in search of bread,
children in search of work,
children of Sanchez
You never educated,
children you abandoned,
children of a gringo stepfather
children from the bottom,
children imperfect,
children with the chopped Spanish,
children without protection.

Remember we are *Mexicanos*,
We are Chicanos,
and like absent descendents,
remember your prodigal children.

Source: José Antonio Burciaga. *Undocumented Love* (San Jose, California: Chusma House Publications, 1992). Reprinted with permission.

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Glossary of Terms

Braceros—Mexican contract laborers who were admitted legally to the United States to work in agriculture or on the railroads between 1942 and 1964
Centroamerica—Central America
Comerciantes—merchants or tradesmen
El Norte—"the North," referring to the United States
Gringo—a non-Hispanic person; a foreigner (the term is used sometimes with a negative connotation)
Norteño—Northern
Pozole—a Mexican dish or soup made of green Indian corn, meat, and chili
Revolucionarios—those involved in a revolution
Santos—patron saints
Secundaria—secondary education, specifically, junior high school
Tamales—a Mexican dish made of corn with meat inside and wrapped in corn husk
Wetbacks—a derogatory term used to refer to Mexicans who enter the United States illegally

Place Names

El Paso—a city in Texas
El Rio Bravo—a Spanish reference to El Rio Grande
El Rio Grande—a U.S. reference to a river that runs along the border between the United States and Mexico
Hueco—a Spanish reference to Waco
Imelda—a Spanish reference to Smelter Town
Las Cruces—a city in New Mexico
Smelter Town—a town in El Paso, Texas
Smoky Village—another name for Smelter Town
Villa Ahumada—a Spanish translation of Smoky Village
Waco—a city in Texas

resource card #1: literature

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Weedee Peepo
by José Antonio Burciaga

> *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*
>
> Preamble to the Constitution

Twenty-five years ago, when my parents were studying for their naturalization tests, they would ask each other in Spanish, "Have you learned *el Weedee Peepo*?"

It took me awhile to figure out what they were talking about. *Weedee Peepo* was the way my parents pronounced the first words of the preamble to our Constitution. They had to memorize it.

It was a happy and proud day when they went to the courthouse to be sworn in as United States citizens. My father got a haircut, shined his best shoes and wore his best suit. A snappy dresser all his life, he cherished this special occasion, especially since he changed clothes from a maintenance janitor at a synagogue in El Paso.

He also bought an autograph book and had all his friends sign it with little congratulatory messages, from the rabbi and the cantor to the judge who swore them in.

My mother was more subdued. She had been a very patriotic Mexican schoolteacher who had lived and taught Mexico's revolutionary history. For her, becoming a U.S. citizen was more of a convenience after having lived in this country for many years. For fifteen years she had to carry a passport that would allow her to cross the international bridge five times a week to buy produce or visit her mother and sisters. Besides, her six children were all U.S.A.–born. Five years later, I would march off to the wild blue yonder with the Air Force.

But that day at the courthouse was the beginning of their lives as United States citizens. They took their voting rights seriously. At that time, voters in Texas had to pay a poll tax that came to about $1.75. In a family with six children that was a substantial amount twenty-five years ago. Nonetheless, my father insisted on doing his duty as a good citizen.

Before voting in each election, he would ask my older sister Lupita and me for our views on the candidates and the issues. Though he spoke English, it was harder for him to read politically technical literature comfortably. In Spanish, Lupita and I would summarize the propaganda and tell him what we thought was the best choice. But he was not to be conned into our choice. He always made his own

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decision even if it was based on intuition, which most of the time was right on target.

At seventy-six he still voted, but with the help of bilingual voting ballots. I didn't have to translate for him. Besides, living in California, I know zilch about recent Texas politics.

There are people who would condemn my father and other such people for supposedly failing to make an effort to learn to read and write English. He did learn, despite the fact that he usually worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. But he was more comfortable and confident in his native tongue.

His home, El Paso, is a town whose population is officially sixty-two percent Mexican-American (unofficial estimates go as high as seventy percent). Seventy percent of the population speak Spanish, and retail sales in Spanish account for at least fifty percent of the business. This does not include the enormous business the city conducts with Mexico. The communications media are fifty percent Spanish-speaking.

Recently El Paso celebrated its four-hundredth anniversary. Spanish had been spoken there much longer than English. The Spanish arrived in El Paso in 1581; two hundred and twenty-five years later, in 1806, Zebulon Pike became one of the first English speakers to enter El Paso. The Southwest had not been completely conquered.

And so, despite their limited English, my parents became United States citizens. They knew what *Weedee Peepo* meant. It meant *Nosotros el pueblo, We the People.*

Whatever language we speak, we have the same goals stated in our Constitution. If people need a translator when their children are no longer at their side and the government does not consider the job its responsibility, God help this nation.

Source: José Antonio Burciaga. *Weedee Peepo* (Edinburg, Texas: Pan American University Press, 1988). Reprinted with permission from the University of Texas: Pan American Press, Edinburg, Texas © date (12/15/99).

resource card #2: murals

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Mural One: *Viva La Raza*, © 1977 by Daniel Galvez, Berkeley, California.

Mural Two*: *We Are Not a Minority*, © 1979 by Mario Torero, Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlan, Estrada Courts Housing Project, East Los Angeles.

Mural Three*: *Read Between the Lines* (1975), David Rivas Botello, Ford and Olympic Boulevards, East Los Angeles.

*Source: Eva Sperling Cockcroft and Holly Barnet-Sánchez, eds., *Signs from the Heart: California Chicano Murals* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

Murals reprinted with permission from the artists.

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THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Miguel Rodriguez
Lumberyard Manager
Chicago, Illinois

For the poor person work is like medicine. If you are working your day passes quickly, and you feel you have done something. I like to work. I never like to arrive late and I don't like to miss. When they see this they know I am a hard worker. Then when I ask for time off to go to Mexico I don't feel bad. They know I am there, they can count on me. I am dedicated to my work.

Other people aren't like this. I see many young people who come to work. They have graduated from high school, but they don't know how to add and subtract and they don't know how to work. I only went to third grade. In my case there were schools where I lived that went up to *secundaria*. But my father left us when my brothers and sisters and I were little. So I had to go to work.

Soon I will be here twenty-two years. I came as a tourist and went to work that same month. And since I arrived I have been working at the same place, with the same company I began with.

Well, I left the company once, for a month. I asked for more money and they wouldn't pay me. So I asked for my vacation and went to work at a company across the street. Later they called and asked me, "What do you want?" Originally I had asked for fifteen cents an hour more. This was in 1979. So they said well, we'll pay you the fifteen cents. But I told them no, now it was seventy-five cents because the minimum had gone up. So they gave me the seventy-five cents. It must be that my work is good, because I've never had any problems.

I began cutting wood on the machines. I worked a year cutting lumber, then they gave me the opportunity to drive the forklift that carries the lumber. I learned how to drive it quickly, and I have been driving for twenty years. It was a little difficult at first because the owners don't speak Spanish. I had to learn to communicate, so I took classes at the library to learn English. I learned enough to speak and fill out applications. I drive the forklift, load lumber, and sometimes I help cut, or manage the people who are cutting. Because of the experience I have, I know what they need cut. Most of the others have five or six years, and I have twenty-two.

We always thought that there was another world on the other side of the border that we wanted our children to know. Many people here think that this is the whole world. There are children who speak only English and can't communicate with their grandparents, and then there are children who speak only Spanish and won't have opportunities here. We wanted them to study in Mexico when they finished grammar school so that they would speak both languages.

When we took the children back to Mexico they began at the American school. It was very inexpensive then. I had planned to return to Mexico in two years, but after that the school became very expensive. There was nothing to do but continue working. Originally

I had thought they would go to the university there, but they wanted to come back to go to school here. I am very happy because they are looking toward their future, and they can speak both languages. When they went to take the SAT exam, the others who were taking it didn't even finish or fill the page. So I feel good that they know both languages and they are educated. For them, once they graduate they can decide what to do. They will have opportunities on both sides. What's more, it makes me feel good because they say they're from Guadalajara.

We both sacrificed so that this would be possible. Elena has had to take care of the children alone, and I have been here also alone, working every day so that I could support them.

My idea is to return to Mexico as soon as possible. I want to see that Michael and Lisa are doing well in school and work a few years more. It would be fine if Elena came here too, but Dolly is still in school, and Elena can't live here easily because of her arthritis. I would like to work a while longer and then perhaps I can return to Mexico and start a business.

I know that this isn't my country, but I have made a living here. I have never been treated badly. Here you can have anything you want if you're willing to work for it. That's not true in Mexico. I've never regretted coming here.

Domitila Navar Corral
Retired Partner of Family Dairy
El Paso, Texas

My sister and I grew up helping my mother with the large family we had. After we finished school my father didn't want us to work. It wasn't the custom for the daughters of Mexican families to work, so we stayed at home. My older sister was a bilingual secretary. At that time there were very few. And she learned telegraphy in English and Spanish. She was offered very good positions, but my father never wanted her to work. I studied for an accounting career, and I helped my brothers in the office.

I think our family was the same as others. When everyone was young they had religious obligations to complete. They were, as you would say, a must.

I am more than eighty-one years old. I came with my parents to El Paso, Texas, on July 23, 1915. I was seven years old. This was when the revolution began. My grandfather and my father were *comerciantes* in Corrales, Durango, and they didn't want anything to do with the *revolucionarios* who came to our town, so they sold everything they had and left. They established themselves in the city of Durango. But the revolution continued escalating, and the *revolucionarios* began coming to Durango too. It was very dangerous for Grandfather and Father because they were very well known. "Are you with this side or the other?" And they didn't want any part of it. That was when they decided to come to the United States.

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There were my parents, an aunt, and my grandparents. The whole family came, and to this day we have continued to be united. When we arrived they said we didn't need papers or passports, we could just pass. But my father insisted that it be formal. He wanted to legalize our residence, and on July 23, 1915, we crossed into the United States.

My parents never spoke English but they wanted to maintain our traditions, and the ways they continued we still continue. We always celebrate Christmas with the whole family, the New Year, the Three Kings on the sixth of January, and all of the birthdays. We celebrate here because the house is big and everyone can come. We celebrate with all the Mexican traditions, all.

When we have the dinners we eat a little of everything, a little American and a little Mexican. We always have American-style Thanksgiving dinner for the whole family, with the turkey and stuffing. The Christmas celebration is Mexican style with *tamales*. So we've made a mix of traditions. And we often have *pozole* just because it is the dish our family prefers.

We never became U.S. citizens. We are still citizens of Mexico. People ask us why, I tell them we work here and pay taxes on the money we make here, but we will always be Mexican.

Dr. Celestino Fernandez
Vice President for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

The change was so dramatic. It was complete culture shock. We went from a small town in Mexico with a population of about 700 to a community of about 48,000 in California. The traffic seemed like it never stopped in Santa Rosa, whereas in Santa Inez we'd see a bus or a truck go by only once in a while. There we had cobblestone streets, here it was all pavement. Santa Rosa is almost rural, but coming from a community of 700 people, it looked like a megalopolis. I was eight and a half.

Yes, the size was different, but there was much more than that. Everything and anything, all the way from hot running water to electricity, at any time of the day. In Mexico we had electricity maybe a couple of hours a day, but we didn't know when, so one never depended on it. No refrigerators, no stoves, no washing machines, and we moved into a home with all those things. Beyond that, it was very enclosed. There were a lot of windows, but it was enclosed. In Mexico our bedrooms were enclosed, the kitchen was enclosed, but that was it. The rest of the time we were, in a sense, living outdoors.

We knew everybody in Santa Inez and everybody knew us, not only in that little town, but in all the towns and ranches around. Everybody was family in that respect. In the evening we would go to my grandmother's and sit around the fire and chat. Even when I visit now, that's what we do; we sit around the kitchen and talk. We moved from that to Santa Rosa, California, where we didn't know anyone.

resource card #3: oral histories

School was different from in Mexico. There I had gone to kindergarten and Catholic school with the nuns, and I was one of their favorites. The teachers were friends of my family, it was all family. Here I had a very nice second grade teacher, Mrs. Albright. She was very warm. We still communicate. We were close but it was very different. She made sure that I was taken care of. We would walk together and she would hold my hand. It was real important because I was scared.

From elementary school on I worked after school and weekends. In the winter, picking up brush in the apple orchard after they prune, and in the summer picking apples off the ground, then later in the packing house. In high school I worked at a golf course and in a bakery. I always had a job, so I never had the opportunity for sports or anything like that. I'd just rush off from school to work.

So it wasn't easy. My dad owed a good deal of money in simply bringing us here. He used to work in the apple orchards, but in the winter it rained and there was no work. So he would save up in the summers and we'd use it up in the winter, and it went around like that. But we all worked to help.

I feel Mexican and I behave American. Inside, my feelings, my values, my attitudes, my beliefs are based in Mexican culture, but my behavior is very American. I feel very comfortable here. I understand the system and I can work it. My wife says when I'm in Mexico I'm Mexican. I know that system as well and can fit in and behave Mexican. I'm the only one in my family who is a naturalized American citizen.

We came up here with almost the same idea all Mexicans come up with. We'd work for a couple of years and then go back and do something down there. That something changed over the years. At one time it was putting up a *granja*, a chicken farm, another time it was pigs, the next time a little store. It changed but we never really lost that emotion of going back.

One time we went back for about six months because my parents thought they were going to make it. Later we went back for another four months and tried again. It never worked out. Then one thing happened and another and years passed and my parents said, "Let's wait till the kids are out of school." Of course we're not all the same age, so we were never all out of school. My dad just retired last year and they still maintain a home in Santa Inez. They've been fixing it up over the years. They were saying they're going to go back and retire there. I think they'll go back to live there. What happens is you become binational and bicultural. You're comfortable in both countries but never fully integrated in either. You don't want to be, because you know the best world is in the margins, in between, where you can choose and take what is best from each culture.

Source: Marilyn P. Davis. *Mexican Voices, American Dreams: An Oral History of Mexican Immigration to the United States* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990). Reprinted with permission.

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OVERVIEW OF MEXAMERICA

The term "MexAmerica" has been used by many people to signify the borderlands between the United States and Mexico. Depending on who is speaking, the region can include the major border towns in both countries, or it can stretch as far as Los Angeles, California, and Monterrey, Mexico. A historian and editor of *The Nation*, the late Carey McWilliams once wrote, "A binational, bicultural, bilingual regional complex or entity is emerging in the borderlands. . . . Nothing quite like this zone of interlocking economic, social and cultural interests can be found along any other border of comparable length in the world."

Indeed, the language, customs, economics, media, music, food, politics, architecture, and fashion in the area are a fusion of U.S. and Mexican influences. Among the strongest evidence of this mixture is the emphasis placed on bilingual education, with much of federal spending spread throughout the Southwest in teaching Spanish to non-Mexican-Americans and teaching English to Mexican-Americans. Some English words have been fused with Spanish terms (*hamburgesa, truckos*) and are commonplace in the language of the borderlands. Cultural manifestations clearly show a blending of American and Mexican, such as musical rhythms. As one researcher wrote, "'Norteno music is as characteristic of northeastern Mexico and South Texas as Dixieland is of New Orleans."

The flow of people within and around MexAmerica is also economically significant to the region. One clear testimony to the importance of commerce among the border towns is the *maquiladora*. Workers have been attracted to the border area by these assembly plants since they were introduced by the Mexican National Border Economic Development Program and the Industrialization Program of the Border in the 1960s. Factories in Mexico—mostly American-owned—assemble components from the United States and send them back to the United States duty-free. Most *maquiladora* employees work in the six states along the U.S.–Mexico border, but "spend their paychecks on the American side."*

The flow of capital within and around MexAmerica has also been stimulated by the passing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994.

Finally, the political atmosphere in MexAmerica is ever-changing, as more and more Mexican Americans, for example, are gaining political savvy and proactively seeking more representation for people of Mexican origin. As for the part of MexAmerica that is technically Mexico, the area is dominated by the conservative political party, Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN).

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* Larry Rohter "Immigration Law Portends Uncertainty in 'MexAmerica,'" *The New York Times*, June 7, 1987.

group assignments

MEXAMERICA

1. Develop a regional newspaper for MexAmerica.
2. Write the political agenda for MexAmerica.
3. Write the economic agenda for MexAmerica.
4. Write the social agenda for MexAmerica.
5. Create a community/cultural center for MexAmerica.
6. Establish a school for MexAmerica.

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Lesson Three

WHAT IS NAFTA?

A LOOK AT INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMICS

Organizing Questions

- How are the economies of the United States and Mexico interdependent?
- What are some of the reasons behind the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)?

Introduction

This lesson introduces students to the basic contemporary economic situations of the United States and Mexico in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and international trade. In the first part of the lesson, students explore categories of international exchange and evaluate the nature of exchange that takes place between countries. In the second part of the lesson, students are introduced to the concept of free trade and the purpose behind a trade agreement such as NAFTA. In the third part of the lesson, students participate in a role-play in which they must decide where to build a textile factory. They are provided with data on the United States and Mexico and consider factors that help them make an investment decision on where to build the factory.

Objectives

- to explain the history and meaning of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
- to introduce the basic concepts and categories of international exchange and economic interdependence
- to familiarize students with the complexities of international trade and trade agreements
- to have students appreciate and understand the strengths and weaknesses of economies of different countries
- to have students recognize the importance of cooperation between countries
- to have students use analytical thinking skills in decision-making activities
- to engage students in working cooperatively in small groups

Materials

- Teacher Information Card #1: Key Points of NAFTA
- Teacher Information Card #2: Trade Agreements
- Transparency #1: Where Was It Made or Assembled?

lesson three

- Handout #1: What Is Free Trade?, one copy per student
- Handout #2: Background History of NAFTA, one copy per student
- Activity Card #1: Where to Build a Textile Plant: Factors to Consider, one copy per small group
- Activity Card #2: Where to Build a Textile Plant: Data Sheet, one copy per small group
- Glossary, one copy per student
- Overhead projector
- Large sheets of newsprint

Time

- at least three class periods

Procedure: Part One

1. The opening activity is designed to introduce students to the topic of international trade and the idea of internationally linked economies. Begin by asking students to consider their personal belongings, specifically the ones they have with them in school (clothing, bags, shoes, electronic items, etc.). Ask them to search for labels that identify the country in which the item was made or assembled. Have each student write down at least two examples.
2. Next, using student responses, fill in Transparency #1, Where Was It Made or Assembled? Then facilitate a discussion with the following questions:
   - What is the difference between a product that is made somewhere versus one that is assembled somewhere?
   - Were you surprised to find out where some of your belongings were made?
   - Which ones surprised you the most?
   - Do you notice any patterns—for instance, that certain countries produce disproportionate amounts of certain types of products?
   - What does this tell you about the relationship between international economies or about the United States and other countries?
3. Inform students that these are just a tiny fraction of the goods exchanged between countries in terms of international trade. Point out that "exchange" is not limited to consumer products like the ones just discussed, but also includes the exchange of information, technology, people, finance, and culture.

4. Divide the class into five groups and give each group a large sheet of newsprint. Assign each group to write one of the following words at the top of their paper: information, technology, people, finance, and culture. (The sixth category is "goods," which you have already completed as a class.)

5. To avoid confusion, use the following as an example: "In the previous activity, we discussed the international exchange of *goods*. For example, we learned that your J. Crew sunglasses were actually made in China. Make a list of specific examples like this for your assigned category." Allow the groups 5–10 minutes to come up with specific examples of international exchange in their category. Use the following as a guide for your reference, but keep in mind that these are only examples and not necessarily representative of all economies:
   - Goods (see Transparency #1, which has already been filled in by the class)
   - Information—television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, films, expertise
   - Technology—appliances, computers, cars, buses, machinery, medicine, technological expertise
   - People—tourists, teachers, students, transportation workers, immigrants, undocumented workers, entertainers
   - Finance—cash, stocks, investments, monetary aid
   - Culture—music, language, beliefs, customs, food, dance, arts

6. Allow groups to present their work and share their examples. Tape the sheets in a place where everyone can see them. See if the rest of the class can offer suggestions and examples to add to the lists. Otherwise, prompt them using the lists above.

7. Next, generate a discussion around the following questions:
   - Is exchange between countries always equal?
   - What are some examples of unequal exchange?
   - Do you notice any patterns here?
   - What do you think are some of the reasons behind the international exchange of commodities and services?
   - How can international trade benefit a country?
   - How can it hurt a country?

Part Two

1. Inform students that this part of the lesson will introduce them to the concept of free trade in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Divide the class into groups of three and distribute Handout #1, What Is Free Trade?, and the Glossary to each student. Instruct students to read the handout and answer the questions that follow. Tell students that words written in **bold** type are defined in the Glossary.
2. Discuss the following questions as a class. Be sure each group participates in the discussion.

- Do you know of any free trade agreements besides NAFTA? (*e.g., the European Union*)
- Give at least two examples of the division of labor in everyday life.
- Why might countries want to discourage trade by using tariffs and quotas on imported goods? (*They may want to protect their domestic industries by keeping foreign goods out of their consumer market. They might want to protect an infant industry from cheaper imported goods. They might also want to discourage trade for political reasons.*)
- How might using tariffs and quotas on imported goods help a country's domestic industries? (*Imported goods with added tariffs would become more expensive and perhaps less attractive to consumers. This could help domestic industries because consumers might then be inclined to buy the cheaper, domestically made products. Quotas could help domestic industries by limiting the amount of foreign goods being sold.*)
- Can you think of any foreign countries whose products are heavily imported by the United States? What kinds of products are imported? Do you think comparative advantage is illustrated by these examples? How?

3. Distribute Handout #2, Background History of NAFTA, to each student. Words written in **bold** type are defined in the Glossary. If there is time left in the class period, allow students to read through the handout and discuss it afterwards. Otherwise, use it as a homework assignment and have students turn in their answer sheets. The next activity will depend on students' familiarity with the information in this handout. Base your class discussion on the following questions:
   - What were some of the reasons why a regional free trade agreement was considered by the United States?
   - What were some of the reasons why Mexico wanted to sign a trade agreement with the United States?
   - What was Canada's position on the agreement?
   - What are some of the trade barriers that NAFTA removed between the United States, Canada, and Mexico?
   - How does Mexico's desire to enter into a free trade agreement with the United States illustrate global economic interdependence?
   - How does NAFTA illustrate the delicacy of relations between countries?

Part Three

1. The following activity is designed to give students a better look at NAFTA's effect on economic relations between the United States and Mexico. Explain to students that since the focus of this curriculum is on U.S.–Mexico relations, the role of Canada will be left out of this activity even though NAFTA was an agreement

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made between the three countries.

2. Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Each group will act as a board of directors of a large U.S. multinational corporation making a decision on the location of production facilities. Distribute Activity Card #1, Where to Build a Textile Plant: Factors to Consider, to each group. The students should read this handout, which describes the factors the students will need to take into account in analyzing and comparing the information from the two countries being considered as the location for the proposed textile factory. Allow about 15 minutes for each group to discuss these factors and attempt to rank them in order of importance. This activity will help the students better understand and evaluate these factors before proceeding with the decision-making process.
3. Next, distribute Activity Card #2 to each group. This handout contains basic information about the United States and Mexico. Have the students read the information provided, using it as a basis for evaluating the desirability of each country as the location of a textile factory. Students should be encouraged to use almanacs, encyclopedias, magazine articles, the Internet (if access is available), and other sources of information that they feel would be useful in making their decision. Each group of students should reach a consensus as to which country should be the site of the factory.

4. Ask each group to report its decision to the class and the reasons for it. Also, ask each group to report on the decision-making process among group members. Did the group have trouble reaching a decision by consensus? Finally, have each group analyze the global implications of the decision it reached. Some questions that can be used to guide the students are:
   - Which country would be negatively affected by this decision? Positively affected?
   - What might be some effects of this decision on workers in each country? On consumers in each country? On the governments of each country?
   - How will your decision to build a factory in the country you chose link that country's economy more closely to the rest of the world?
   - How did NAFTA influence your decision to build a factory in that country?
   - Why is it important to consider the overall economic climate of a country when making this type of decision?
5. Each group's answers will vary depending on which country it selected and its reasons for selecting it. However, from these questions, the students should begin to see how the rise of multinational corporations and global production systems has led

to increasing global interdependence. Economic decisions made daily by large corporations have global effects on workers, consumers, and national governments. Increasingly, the various countries of the world are linked in a single global economy.

6. Debrief the entire lesson by generating a discussion using the following questions as a guide:

   - What was the most surprising thing that you learned about international trade?
   - What are some other aspects of daily life that illustrate the increasing interdependence and globalization of our world?
   - Do you think free trade agreements work according to their purpose?

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KEY POINTS OF NAFTA

Key Points	What NAFTA Will Do
Agriculture	Tariffs on farm products would be eliminated over 15 years.
Automobiles	Tariffs would be eliminated over 10 years. Cars will have to be manufactured in North America to qualify for free trade.
Energy	In 10 years companies in the United States and Canada will be allowed to bid on contracts from PEMEX, Mexico's oil company.
Finance	Limits on ownership of banks and insurance companies would be removed by the year 2000.
Government procurement	Government contracts of each country would be open to suppliers of the other two countries participating in NAFTA.
High technology	Mexican tariffs on computers would be reduced over five years beginning in 1994.
Immigration	Restrictions in all three countries on travel of businesspeople and professionals would be removed.
Patent and copyright protection	Mexico would strengthen laws protecting intellectual property, giving protection to U.S. technology, entertainment, and drug companies.
Rules of origin	Goods must be a percentage North American or all North American-made.
Tariffs	All tariffs on products that are North American would be eliminated immediately or over five to 15 years beginning in 1994.
Telecommunications	U.S. and Canadian companies would have access to Mexico's network.
Textiles	Tariffs would be eliminated over 10 years on garments and fabrics made in North America.
Trucking	Trucks would have free access across the borders of the three countries by the year 2000.

teacher information card #2

TRADE AGREEMENTS

Agreement	Countries
Andean Pact	Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM)	Antigua and Barbuda; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Jamaica; Montserrat; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago
Central American Common Market (CACM)	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua
European Union (EU)	Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Finland, and Sweden
G-3	Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)	Canada, Mexico, United States
Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)	Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay

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WHERE WAS IT MADE OR ASSEMBLED?

Item description	Country of origin?	Where was it made?	Where was it assembled?
Example: J. Crew sunglasses	U.S.A.	China	

handout #1

What Is Free Trade?

To understand NAFTA, one must first be familiar with the concept of **free trade**. Simply put, free trade is a policy by which a government tries to remove as many barriers as possible to encourage trade. Some typical barriers to trade include **tariffs** and **quotas**. Trade barriers such as these have different purposes. Sometimes governments try to protect their own countries' industries by keeping foreign competitors out. They can do this by charging tariffs, or taxes and/or by setting quotas, limiting the amount of foreign goods that can be imported. Another reason for charging tariffs is to raise money for the government.

When countries have a free trade policy it does not mean that all tariffs and quotas are eliminated entirely, although certainly it can be the case. Sometimes the free trade policy might only lessen the tariffs and quotas, or it might even specify which goods are subject to tariffs and which are not.

The concept of free trade is based on an economic theory of the division of labor and comparative advantage. According to this theory, removing barriers to trade and investment is supposed to promote economic efficiency because countries can specialize in producing goods and services in which they have a comparative advantage relative to their trading partners. Comparative advantage can best be illustrated by the following example: If Country A is superb at producing cars but terrible at producing textiles, and Country B is superb at producing textiles but terrible at producing cars, then Country A should concentrate on car production and Country B should concentrate on textile production. They should then trade with each other. Country A would have the comparative advantage of car production over Country B, and Country B would have the comparative advantage of textile production over Country A. If both countries tried to produce both cars and textiles, they would waste valuable resources, energy, money, and time. But if the countries each concentrate on what they produce best and then trade with each other, they will both be better off. Free trade operates according to this theory, that removing trade barriers leads to specialization, greater efficiency, and higher production.

Questions:

1. Do you know of any free trade agreements besides NAFTA?

2. Give at least two examples of the division of labor in everyday life.

3. Why might countries want to discourage trade by using tariffs and quotas on imported goods?

4. How might using tariffs and quotas on imported goods help a country's domestic industries?

5. Can you think of any foreign countries whose products are heavily imported by the United States? What kinds of products are imported? Do you think comparative advantage is illustrated by these examples? How?

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BACKGROUND HISTORY OF NAFTA

In recent years, some economists feel that the **globalization** of economies has made it advantageous for nations to negotiate **mutually beneficial** trade agreements with their neighbors. These agreements are based on economic theories of **free trade**, and include policies that effectively transform a group of nations into regional trading partners. As global **economic interdependence** continues to draw nations' economies closer together, some economists believe that free trade is the way to strengthen the ties of interdependence. Other economists argue that free trade agreements tend to make economically weaker nations dependent on the stronger nations, which ends up being harmful to the weaker nations in the long run. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect on January 1, 1994 and bound the United States' trading economy with Canada's and Mexico's.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a trend toward regional trade agreements swept the world. **Pacts** such as the U.S.–Canada Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) in 1988, the European Union (EU) in 1993, and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in South America in 1995 all aimed to **stimulate** international trade among their member countries. NAFTA was inspired partly by the success of the EU, and became an extension of CUFTA to include Mexico. The process may sound simple, but it was quite the opposite; much controversy surrounded the United States' and Canada's decision to sign a free trade agreement with Mexico, whose economy is much less developed than those of the United States and Canada. As a result, in addition to the trade policies of NAFTA, there were also heated debates regarding labor and environmental issues that resulted in the passing of additional side agreements.

In 1990, former Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari decided to ask the United States to negotiate a free trade agreement. During the 1970s, short-sighted economic policies and an ill-timed global recession plunged Mexico in to such a severe **debt crisis** by 1982 that it spent the rest of the 1980s struggling to recover. One of the most significant measures of economic reform during this decade was the reversal of some of Mexico's **protectionist policies** regarding international trade. For much of the 20th century, Mexico had preferred to protect its **domestic industries** by imposing extremely high tariffs that kept foreign goods out. By lowering these tariffs, the Mexican market became much more attractive to international trade and foreign investors, both of which played important roles in improving Mexico's economy.

President Salinas de Gortari hoped that a comprehensive free trade agreement with the United States would increase Mexico's international economic **legitimacy**. To be competitive in foreign markets, Mexico needed to be at a level where its products were good enough to rival foreign products. In order for this to happen, Mexican industry would need access to the United States' better **financial services** and cheaper **capital**. Another benefit of a comprehensive agreement would be that Mexico might also be able to obtain **concessions** in areas in which it had comparative advantages, such as agriculture. If these were negotiated outside the context of a comprehensive agreement, Mexico would be at a disadvantage because the United States would probably be willing to negotiate only on issues that would benefit the United States.

When Mexico began lowering tariffs toward the end of the 1980s, the economic ties between Mexico and the United States became much more significant. For Mexico, the United States became its largest trading partner and largest foreign investor. For the United States, Mexico became its third-largest trading partner after Canada and Japan. By the time

handout #2

Salinas approached U.S. President George Bush about a free trade agreement in 1990, the idea was not as far-fetched as it would have been a decade earlier since the economies were more closely **integrated** than ever before.

For the United States, a regional free trade agreement was seen as a **counterbalance** to trade competition from Asia and particularly Europe since the forming of the EU. It was hoped that NAFTA would contribute to increased trade with Mexico and Canada, more foreign investment opportunities, and more jobs in the United States. In short, President Bush viewed a free trade agreement as a way of encouraging economic transformation in Mexico and believed those transformations would serve U.S. interests.

For Canada, the idea of a regional free trade agreement at first seemed unwise. The recent passing of CUFTA had ignited controversy among the general Canadian populace, who blamed the ensuing Canadian economic recession on the trade agreement with the United States. Still recovering from the public backlash to CUFTA, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was understandably reluctant to stir up public outrage once again with the idea of negotiating yet another free trade agreement with the United States. However, it soon became clear that staying out of NAFTA negotiations might be harmful not only to Canada's long-term economy, but also to its chances of having any real authority in future trade negotiations. Therefore, Canada joined the talks. Surprisingly, the opposition from the Canadian people was not as severe as with CUFTA.

NAFTA was finally passed in 1993 and went into effect on January 1, 1994, creating one of the largest and most comprehensive free trade agreements in the world (Miller-Adams, p. 1). The agreement either immediately eliminated tariffs among the United States, Canada, and Mexico on goods produced in North America, or phases them out over a period of up to 15 years. It also provided for the elimination of many nontariff barriers that have hindered trade in past years (Miller-Adams, p. 1). For example, it opened up borders for foreign investment, prohibited governments from using protectionist policies to restrict trade, and facilitates border crossing for those engaged in businesses in the three countries.

NAFTA's side agreements owe their existence to a **coalition** of **grassroots** labor and environmental activists that emerged early in the NAFTA debate. Mexico's status as a middle-income **developing country** raised concerns about workers' rights and environmental protection, two potential problem areas often associated with developing countries. The concerns of this coalition were, first, to ensure that labor standards and workers' rights would be protected within NAFTA countries, and second, to secure stronger environmental protection within the NAFTA **bloc**. The campaign to include labor and environmental provisions as part of NAFTA was mainly a response to the questionable working conditions and extreme pollution of **maquila** production sites along the U.S.-Mexican border (Miller-Adams, p. 9).

Since NAFTA went into effect in 1994, there has been much debate over its effectiveness. NAFTA's impact has already been felt in trade and investment, jobs and wages, labor and environmental standards, and foreign policy. As with many government policies, it has been declared a success by some and a failure by others, but it is still too early to measure the true impact. In 2009 NAFTA will be in full effect, and trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico will be completely "free" as called for in the agreement. Maybe then it will be more clear whether or not it was a good idea.

handout #2

Write down your answers to the following questions. Use at least one or two sentences for each answer.

- What were some of the reasons why a regional free trade agreement was considered by the United States?

- What were some of the reasons why Mexico wanted to sign a trade agreement with the United States?

- What was Canada's position on the agreement?

- What are some of the trade barriers that NAFTA removed between the United States, Canada, and Mexico?

- How does Mexico's desire to enter into a free trade agreement with the United States illustrate global economic interdependence?

- How does NAFTA illustrate the delicacy of relations between countries?

activity card #1

WHERE TO BUILD A TEXTILE PLANT: FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Wages: How much do factory workers get paid in each country? This is important because it will determine how much your company will have to pay workers in its textile plant.

Availability of Skilled Labor: What is the education system of the country like? Will it be easy to obtain enough educated and trained workers to fill positions for engineers, mechanics, accountants, managers, etc.?

Political Stability: How stable is the country's government? Will it be able to maintain law and order? To protect your investment, you will only want to build a factory in a country where you are reasonably sure that you can continue to operate the factory for years in the future. A major concern for many multinational corporations with plants in developing countries is that a revolutionary government may come to power and expropriate (take over) one of their factories.

Transportation System: How well is the country linked to the rest of the world? Will you be able to ship in parts and ship out the finished products quickly and cheaply? Ideally, the factory should be located near the world's leading markets so that transportation costs will be kept low.

Import/Export Restrictions: Are there any tariffs, import quotas, or other governmental trade restrictions that will influence your decision?

Government Regulations: Before deciding to invest in a factory, a company needs to know such things as: What will be the attitude of the government toward the company's decision to build a textile plant there? What government regulations will the company have to comply with? How much will it have to pay in taxes, etc.?

Cultural and Linguistic Factors: Will the language differences create communication problems? Will the nation's customs be compatible with the established principles and procedures of your company? The attitudes and practices that determine the relationship between labor and management will be especially important to a company interested in building a textile plant.

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WHERE TO BUILD A TEXTILE PLANT: DATA SHEET

Before deciding where to build a textile plant, a company must gather information about the countries where the plant could be built. Provided here is basic information on the two countries that are being considered by your multinational textile company as a location for a large textile plant. Use this and any other information about these countries that you can find in magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, the Internet, etc. Your group must decide in which of these countries the plant should be built. Your group must reach a decision by consensus (everyone must agree). Groups will be asked to report on their decisions and how the decisions were made.

Factors	United States	Mexico
Wages	U.S. workers are among the highest paid in the world. At the end of 1997, the **per capita gross domestic product** (GDP) in the United States was $30,200.	Mexican workers in general receive very low wages compared to those received by U.S. workers. At the end of 1997, the per capita GDP in U.S. dollars was $7,700.
Availability of Skilled Labor	The unemployment rate in the United States was 4.9 percent in 1997.	In 1997 the Mexican unemployment rate was only 3.7 percent. This number does not accurately reflect the scarcity of jobs in the country. Mexico has a considerable number of underemployed people (those who want to work full-time but cannot find full-time work), particularly in large urban centers. In addition, many people who cannot find employment in Mexico migrate to the United States.
Political Stability	The United States is regarded as one of the world's most secure democracies. There is very little chance of revolution or other disorder that could threaten the operation of a plant located in the United States in the foreseeable future.	One party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), has governed Mexico for over 60 years. Although an uprising by indigenous people, which started on January 1, 1994, in the southern state of Chiapas continues, it is unlikely that the Zapatistas, as the rebels are called, will overthrow the government. Change is more likely to come about through the ballot box during the 2000 presidential elections.

activity card #2

Transportation System	• 240,000 km of railways • 6.42 million km of highways (3.9 million km paved and 2.5 million km unpaved) • 41,009 km of navigable inland channels • 22 major ports • 14,574 airports (5,167 with paved runways)	• 20,567 km of railways • 252,000 km of highways (24,248 km paved and 157,752 km unpaved) • 2,900 km of navigable rivers and coastal canals • 16 ports and harbors • 1,810 airports (231 with paved runways)
Import/Export Restrictions	NAFTA removed all governmental trade restrictions for your type of product.	NAFTA removed all governmental trade restrictions for your type of product.
Government Regulations	• Strict anti-trust regulations designed to ensure that companies compete with each other rather than collude to fix prices or hurt the consumer in other ways. • Anti-trust regulations also have the effect of discouraging most kinds of cooperation between companies. • Factories must follow a number of government regulations affecting health, safety, energy consumption, labor-management relations, pollution control, etc.	• Since the passage of NAFTA, regulations on air and water pollution have increased. • There are also guidelines which foreign companies must follow when establishing a factory in the country, particularly with regard to labor relations, wages, taxes, and pollution. • The Mexican government encourages foreign companies to set up factories within its borders because it benefits greatly from tax revenue and its people benefit from increased employment opportunities.
Cultural and Linguistic Factors	English is the official language. In certain states there are communities where people speak Spanish, but all schoolchildren learn English.	Spanish is the official language. There are communities where people speak other indigenous languages, but all school-children learn Spanish. Approximately 90 percent of the population is nominally Catholic.

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GLOSSARY

bloc—a combination of nations forming a unit with a common interest or purpose. In the case of NAFTA, the common interest or purpose of the United States, Canada, and Mexico is international trade.

capital—accumulated goods devoted to the production of other goods, or the accumulated possessions calculated to bring in income

coalition—a temporary alliance of distinct parties or people for joint action

concession—something granted as a right or privilege

counterbalance—something that opposes or balances with an equal force

debt crisis—a situation of owing more money than one is able to pay back

developing country—a country that is in the process of becoming industrialized

domestic—originating in one's home country

economic interdependence—the condition of two or more parties being dependent on each other for things they need. Global economic interdependence refers to the situation today in which many of the world's countries are dependent on other countries for their economic well-being.

exports—goods produced in one country that are transported to another country for sale. One country's exports are another country's imports.

financial services—refers to labor that deals with money issues (banking, investing, etc.) and does not produce tangible commodities like other industries (textiles, manufacturing, etc.)

free trade—policy by which a government removes barriers to international trade

globalization—the increasing interaction between countries that leads to the world functioning as a single unit instead of a collection of independent nations

grassroots—referring to the basic level of society. A grassroots organization would be one made up of ordinary citizens.

gross domestic product (GDP)—the total value of the goods and services produced in a nation during a specific time period

imports—goods sold in one country that have been produced in another country

industry—a branch of a craft, art, business, or manufacturing

integrated—coordinated to function as a unified whole

legitimacy—the quality or state of being legal, authorized, justified, rightful

glossary

maquila or maquiladora—foreign-owned assembly plants located mainly on the U.S.-Mexican border, that make and assemble products such as televisions, jeans, automobile parts, toys, etc., using freely imported parts

mutually beneficial—helpful or advantageous to both parties involved

pact—an international treaty

per capita—a Latin term that means "per person"

protectionist policy—a policy that safeguards domestic industries against foreign competition by placing restrictions on imports of foreign competitors. The chief measure used is the tariff because it raises the price of an imported good and makes it less attractive to consumers than domestic products.

quota—the maximum number that may be admitted to a nation or a group

stimulate—to promote greater activity and growth

tariff—the tax that a government collects on goods coming in from another country. Other terms used interchangeably with "tariff" are duty and customs.

Lesson Four

NAFTA AND THE ENVIRONMENT
THE DEBATE CONTINUES

Organizing Questions

- What are some of the basic environmental concerns about NAFTA?
- What are some of the perspectives regarding the effects of free trade on the environment?

Introduction

Before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect in 1994, there was a great deal of controversy surrounding how the treaty would impact the environment. Critics maintained that free trade would increase the amount of maquiladoras (assembly plants) along the U.S.–Mexico border and worsen the already abominable environmental conditions, which led some observers to describe the border area as a "pollution haven." They also worried about the less-than-stringent enforcement of Mexico's environmental laws, and how it would affect environmental conditions along the border.

Supporters of the NAFTA treaty, however, claimed that free trade was a friend of the environment. They maintained that free trade opened up the possibilities for improving conditions along the border, through the mutual influence of NAFTA countries on one another's environmental legislation and through the increased income that would result from free trade.

Years after NAFTA's inception, however, the debate continues. In this lesson, students will explore how the treaty impacts the environment, from the perspectives of NAFTA's supporters and opponents. We hope to give students a very broad, basic understanding of the situation, and hope to demonstrate the fact that there are no easy solutions and no one right answer to environmental problems along the border.

Objectives

- to allow students to explore basic environmental concerns about the NAFTA treaty
- to have students investigate cause-and-effect relationships
- to have students think critically about the different perspectives regarding the effects of free trade on the environment

Materials

- Map Transparency, Border Towns (from Lesson One)
- Handout #1: The NAFTA Debate, one copy per student
- Reference Sheet, for the teacher

lesson four

- Web Diagram Pieces (Supporters), one copy per pair of students or small group
- Web Diagram Pieces (Opponents), one copy per pair of students or small group
- Newsprint sheets
- Scissors
- Markers
- Glue stick
- Transparency, What's Being Done About It?
- Resource Sheet #1, Border Towns Face Pollution Crisis Two Years into NAFTA, one copy per pair
- Resource Sheet #2, Give NAFTA Cleanup Time, Panelists Say, one copy per pair
- Student Worksheet, What Do You Think?, one copy per student

Time

- Part One, The NAFTA Debate: one to two periods
- Part Two, Web Diagrams: two periods
- Part Three, What's in the News?: one to two periods

Teacher Preparation

1. This lesson assumes that students have a basic understanding of the concept of free trade. It also requires that students have studied the history and rationale behind the NAFTA treaty.
2. This lesson contains three parts. Since most teachers will not be able to spend time completing all three, it is recommended that Parts One and Two be done together. Part Three may be completed individually.
3. In the procedures of this lesson, answers to questions posed in group discussions are shown in *italics*.

Procedure: Part One, The NAFTA Debate

1. Review some concepts of free trade with students, such as:

   - What is a free trade agreement? (An agreement by which two or more countries try to remove as many barriers as possible to encourage trade with one another.)
   - What are some ways in which free trade can benefit member countries? (Greater efficiency, ability to compete in the world market, higher production, greater specialization, etc.)
   - What are some ways in which free trade might harm member countries? (Possible environmental pollution, loss of jobs when factories are shut down or moved elsewhere.)

2. Then discuss some basic ideas behind NAFTA, such as:

- What does the acronym "NAFTA" stand for? (*North American Free Trade Agreement*)
- When did NAFTA take effect? (*January 1, 1994*)
- What are the three countries involved? (*Mexico, the United States, and Canada*)
- What did NAFTA seek to do? (*NAFTA created one of the largest free trade regimes in the world. It sought to make the bloc of three countries more competitive in the world market, particularly in response to the trading blocs of Asia and Europe.*)

3. Show students the Map Transparency, Border Towns, pointing out some twin cities along the U.S.–Mexico border (e.g., San Diego, California/Tijuana, Baja California; El Paso, Texas/Juarez, Chihuahua).

   Teachers may wish to explain that twin cities are formal relationships set up between cities in the United States and foreign countries. Through such a relationship, both cities hope to gain knowledge and understanding of one another through a cultural exchange. In the case of the twin cities along the U.S.–Mexico border, citizens also work together to solve issues such as environmental problems common to both sides.

   Tell students that they will be exploring how NAFTA can impact the environment in cities and communities along the U.S.–Mexico border.

4. Distribute copies of Handout #1, The NAFTA Debate, one for each student. Explain that before NAFTA was ratified, there was much debate about the effects of the treaty on the environment. This debate continues today.

5. Explain to students they will be reading comments from NAFTA's supporters and opponents in a fictional debate. As students read the debate, tell them to write either an "S" for "Supporter" or an "O" for "Opponent" by the side of each person's name. Tell students that words written in **bold** type are defined at the end of the passage. (Depending on time, this handout could be given to students as homework, if the activity is continued the following day.)

6. Ask for volunteers to read the statements of each person in the debate. Afterwards, discuss the following questions:
   - Who were NAFTA's supporters in this dialogue?
   - Who were its opponents?
   - What effect did NAFTA's supporters think the treaty would have on the environment? (*Supporters believed the treaty could improve the environment.*)
   - Which comments in the debate illustrate this belief?

- What effect did opponents of NAFTA think the treaty would have on the environment? (*Opponents believed the treaty would harm the environment. They claimed increased industrialization would endanger people's health, animals, plants, and natural areas along the border. Opponents also feared that Mexico would not strictly enforce its environmental laws along the border.*)
- What comments in the debate illustrate this belief?
- Do students think all environmentalists were in agreement about NAFTA's impact?

Part Two, Web Diagrams

1. Ask students to reread comments made by Jay Hair and William Reilly (supporters of NAFTA) in The NAFTA Debate.
2. Tell students that they will be creating some web diagrams to figure out basic reasons for why NAFTA's supporters believed free trade could help the environment. Explain that a web diagram is a visual way of showing how certain actions can lead to certain consequences.

   Teachers may wish to define a "consequence" for students, such as "something that happens or is caused by an action or set of conditions." It might be helpful to give students a familiar example. For instance, let's say Gabriella worked and studied hard, so she was able to get a job. This job provided Gabriella with a steady income, which meant she could buy a car. Draw a web diagram on the blackboard with bubbles illustrating this situation.

3. Then divide students into pairs or small groups. Distribute a copy of Web Diagram Pieces (Supporters) and a sheet of newsprint to each pair or group.
4. Have students look very carefully at the consequences written in the web diagram pieces. See if they need any explanation of what each consequence means. Please note that some of these consequences can be interpreted as negative by opponents of free trade.
5. Tell students that they will be writing "Free Trade" in a bubble on a sheet of newsprint. Inform students that they will then be arranging their web pieces in a logical order. Students will need to draw arrows to illustrate the connections between the various consequences. An example is given on the teacher's Reference Sheet on page 89.

6. Ask each group to cut out and arrange its pieces. When students are finished, have them paste their web diagram on a sheet of newsprint and draw in the arrow signs with markers. Have a reporter from each group describe the logic behind his/her group's web diagram.

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7. On a following day, have students look again at The NAFTA Debate. Review some of the comments made by opponents of NAFTA. Tell students that they will be examining a different perspective of how NAFTA impacts the environment, again through a web diagram.

8. Repeat Procedures #2–7, only this time using Web Diagram Pieces (Opponents). As before, students could work in pairs or small groups. Please note that some of these consequences can be interpreted as positive by supporters of free trade. Once again, have a reporter from each group describe to the class the logic behind his/her group's web diagram.
9. As a wrap-up, have each group look at their diagrams, side by side. Ask students to explain the flow of consequences in both diagrams. Open up a discussion about the two perspectives with such questions as:
   - What do students think of the two perspectives?
   - Do they both seem valid?
   - Do students agree with one over the other? If so, why?

Part Three, What's in the News?

1. Follow Procedures #1–3 in Part One (The NAFTA Debate).
2. Explain to students that before and after NAFTA took effect, many people were worried about how free trade would affect the environment. Some were concerned that since environmental laws were more strictly enforced in the United States than in Mexico, U.S. companies would move their factories across the border to Mexico in order to save money, rather than abide by U.S. regulations. Critics thought this increased number of assembly factories along the border would lead to greater air, water, and toxic waste pollution.

3. Using the Transparency, What's Being Done About It?, review some actions taken by the U.S. and Mexican governments, environmental groups, and local citizens.
4. Divide students into pairs. Distribute a copy of Resource Sheet #1, Border Towns Face Pollution Crisis Two Years into NAFTA, and Resource Sheet #2, Give NAFTA Cleanup Time, Panelists Say, and two Student Worksheets, What Do You Think?, to each pair. Tell students that they will be reading articles on the current situation of NAFTA and the environment. Each student will read an article and complete his/her Student Worksheet on that article.

   Tell students that words printed in **bold** type are defined at the end of the reading.

5. When pairs have finished, have them spend about 15 minutes discussing their answers with one another, and what their article was about.
6. Then open up a class discussion on how some students answered their worksheet questions. Afterwards, some questions to discuss with the class might be:
   - Do students feel that both supporters and opponents of NAFTA were justified in their comments?
   - What have students heard of NAFTA in the news?
   - How can events and people of one country influence another country?

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THE NAFTA DEBATE

Before and after NAFTA took effect, many people were worried about how free trade would affect the environment. Some said since environmental laws were more strictly enforced in the United States than in Mexico, U.S. companies would move their factories across the border to Mexico. By doing so, the companies would try to save money, rather than ***abide by*** *U.S. laws that could be expensive to follow. Critics thought this increased number of assembly factories (called maquiladoras) would create more air, water, and* ***toxic waste*** *pollution.*

Dianne Solis
(The Wall Street Journal)

Environmentalists now are playing a leading role in the NAFTA debate. Prospects for NAFTA's passage were thrown into peril last week when a U.S. federal district judge ruled that an environmental impact statement must be prepared before U.S. **ratification** of NAFTA. The Clinton administration has **appealed**, but a decision isn't expected for at least a month. The lawsuit was filed by the Washington offices of Public Citizen, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. But the environmental movement is split on NAFTA; the position of the border groups reflects that division.

President William J. Clinton

NAFTA will improve environmental conditions on the U.S.-Mexico border, something that all Americans know we need to do and something that all Mexicans know we need to do.

Ralph Nader
(Consumer Advocate)

In Brownsville, Texas, just across the border from Matamoros [in Mexico], a **maquiladora** town, babies are being born without brains in record numbers; public health officials in the area believe there is a link between [this health problem] and certain toxic chemicals dumped in streams and on the ground in the **maquiladoras** across the border.

Jay Hair
(President, National Wildlife Federation)

One of the **unwarranted** fears is that NAFTA guarantees environmental abuse. The National Wildlife Federation disagrees. Instead, the trade pact among the United States, Canada, and Mexico provides an opportunity to improve environmental consequences of North American trade. Moreover, with new White House leadership, the negotiation of supplemental agreements to NAFTA could further improve North America's overall environmental progress.

Marie Claire Acosta
(Human Rights Activist)

This government has been using the NAFTA and the support that it got from the Clinton administration to perpetuate itself and to prepare a massive **fraud**.

Barbara Dudley
(President, Greenpeace)

[Supporters of NAFTA] have presented us with one picture of what economic growth is all about, and it's an economic growth that tramples on the people of all three countries and tramples on the environment in which all of us live, including those who voted for this agreement. We want a different future; we believe we can

handout #1

have a different future.

William Reilly

(Former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency)

The environment of Mexico, and [Mexico's] seriousness in raising its standards and enforcing environmental laws, have consequently assumed a critical significance in the debate over the trade agreement. Added to negative stereotypes of Mexico's government, of its environmental record as corrupt and uncaring, is the anti-NAFTA environmentalists' **ambivalence** about economic growth, their fears that any significant development in a poor country must be bad for the environment. In fact, if there is a single large story **inadequately** presented in the extensive press coverage surrounding NAFTA, it is the startling size and fervor of Mexico's environmental commitments.

Michael McCloskey

(Chairman, Sierra Club)

. . . the environment is affected by NAFTA. Past trade agreements have already **aggravated** environmental conditions along the U.S.-Mexican border, and this one could make them worse. If the agreement does produce economic benefits, it will do so by increasing industrialization—and that brings pollution with it. We would end up with twice as many factories along the border, even if some new ones are built in the interior of Mexico for its own market.

Key Words

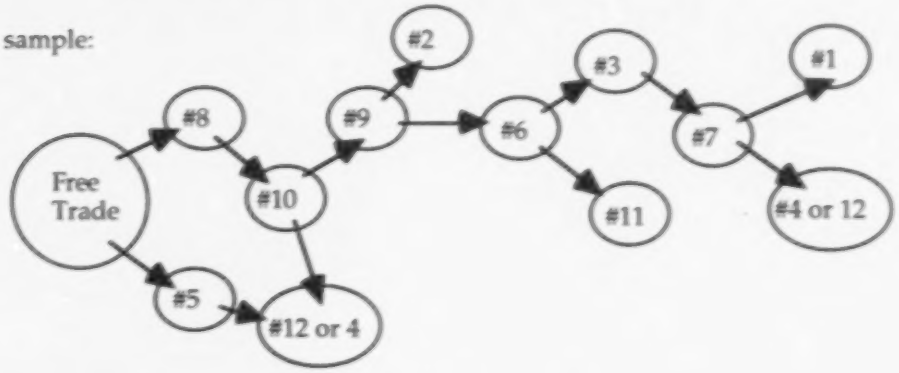
abide by (*vb*): to conform; to follow
aggravate (*v*): to make more severe or serious; to intensify unpleasantly
ambivalence (*n*): mixed feelings about an event; uncertainty as to which approach to follow
appeal (*vb*): to have a legal case reheard in a higher court of law
fraud (*n*): deceit, trickery
inadequately (*adv*): unsatisfactorily; insufficiently
maquiladoras (*n*): foreign-owned assembly plants located mainly on the U.S.-Mexico border, that make or assemble products such as televisions, jeans, automobile parts, toys, etc., using imported parts
ratification (*n*): formal approval
toxic waste (*n*): poisonous waste that can cause serious health problems if brought into contact with people
unwarranted (*adj*): not justifiable

REFERENCE SHEET

Free Trade Consequences (Supporters)

1. Strict enforcement of environmental laws
2. More money for environmental projects
3. People have more money to buy homes and land
4. Changes made to environmental laws
5. Countries work together to determine environmental standards
6. Higher incomes for Mexicans and Americans
7. People demand cleaner neighborhoods, parks, and streets
8. Increase in new factories and businesses
9. Economic growth
10. New factories use latest technology and equipment that reduce pollution
11. People buy more consumer goods
12. Cleaner air and water

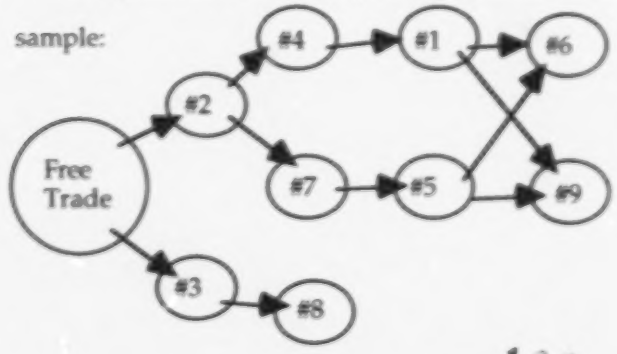
sample:



Free Trade Consequences (Opponents)

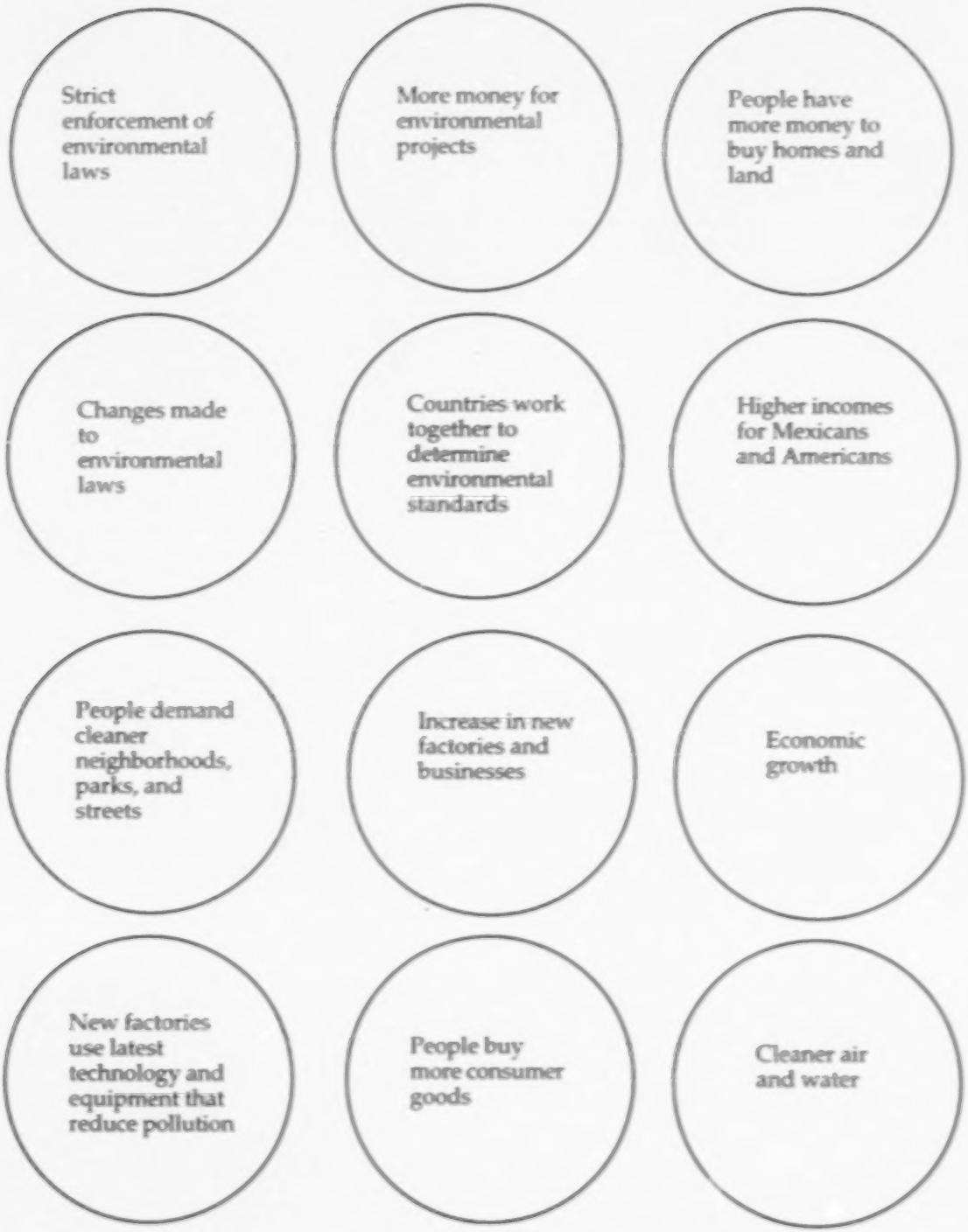
1. More water pollution
2. Increase in factories
3. Countries forced to work together to determine environmental standards
4. More toxic waste disposal in waterways and streams
5. More air pollution
6. Health problems, such as asthma, bronchitis, birth defects, etc.
7. More factory emissions
8. Countries lower their environmental standards so everyone can meet them
9. Endangerment of animals, plants, and natural areas

sample:



web diagram pieces

SUPPORTERS


Strict enforcement of environmental laws
More money for environmental projects
People have more money to buy homes and land
Changes made to environmental laws
Countries work together to determine environmental standards
Higher incomes for Mexicans and Americans
People demand cleaner neighborhoods, parks, and streets
Increase in new factories and businesses
Economic growth
New factories use latest technology and equipment that reduce pollution
People buy more consumer goods
Cleaner air and water

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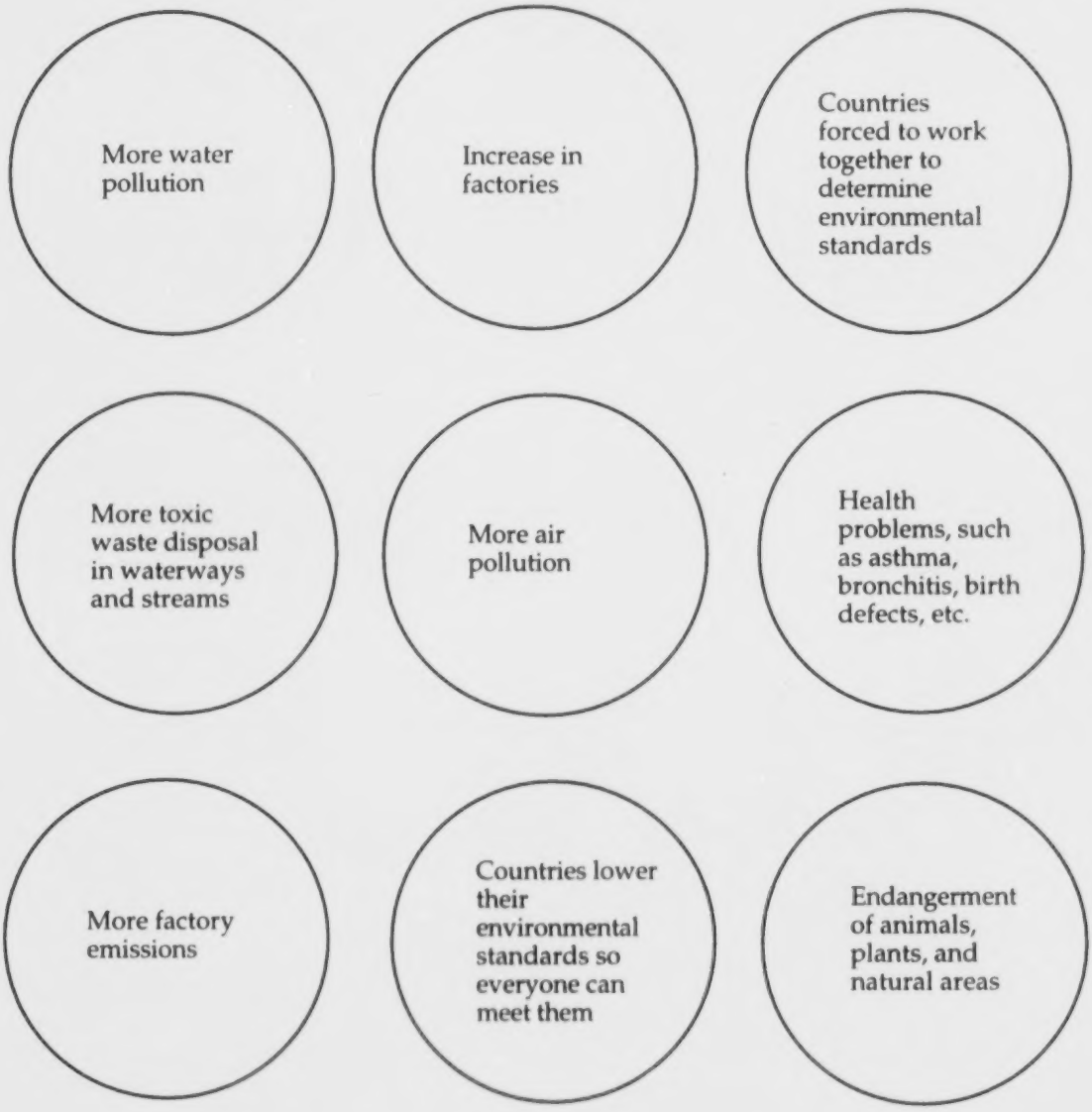
OPPONENTS


More water pollution
Increase in factories
Countries forced to work together to determine environmental standards
More toxic waste disposal in waterways and streams
More air pollution
Health problems, such as asthma, bronchitis, birth defects, etc.
More factory emissions
Countries lower their environmental standards so everyone can meet them
Endangerment of animals, plants, and natural areas

WHAT'S BEING DONE ABOUT IT?

Here are some things that the U.S. and Mexican governments, environmental groups, and local citizens have done to improve the environment.

International Commissions
Environmentalists called for a major cleanup of the existing environmental problems along the border, and for assurance that Mexico was enforcing its environmental laws. Several international organizations were created through supplemental agreements to NAFTA. These included the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and the Border Environment Cooperation Committee (BECC), both formed in 1993. Common goals of these organizations include:

- To promote public awareness of the environment along the U.S.–Mexico border.
- To protect endangered species of animals and plants.
- To decrease air, water, and hazardous waste pollution along the border.
- To work with American and Mexican communities along the border to find solutions to environmental problems.
- To develop, implement, and find funding for environmental projects along the border.

Financial Institutions
In 1993, the North American Development Bank (NADBank) was created to fund environmental projects along the border. In addition, the U.S. and Mexican governments have promised to spend more than $6 billion to clean up the border's problems.

Community Organizations
Many Mexican and American citizens became active in the early 1990s, working with each other and with environmental groups to improve border conditions. Some examples are:

- A task force of American and Mexican business leaders, scientists, environmentalists, and government officials currently works for cleaner air in the region that includes sister cities such as Juarez, Chihuahua and El Paso, Texas.
- Since the early 1990s, citizens in Del Rio, Texas have been working with Mexican officials and citizens to prevent the building of toxic waste dumps in their city.
- In 1996, a Mexican environmental group called Grupo de los Cien worked with the Texas Center for Policy Studies to prevent the extension of the U.S. Intercoastal Waterway into a large fish and bird sanctuary, a move that would endanger the wildlife.

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BORDER TOWNS FACE POLLUTION CRISIS TWO YEARS INTO NAFTA

By Richard A. Ryan, Senior Washington News Correspondent
The Detroit News, January 2, 1996,

WASHINGTON—Life-threatening pollution along the U.S.-Mexican border has sharply increased since the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect two years ago, a watchdog group claimed today.

The increased pollution, accompanied by the dumping of tons of **hazardous waste**, poses a serious health threat to residents of both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border, said Public Citizen, a **Ralph Nader**-founded organization.

"NAFTA has intensified severe problems of water and air pollution, hazardous waste dumping and increased the **incidence** rates of certain diseases and birth defects in the border region," said Joan Claybrook, Public Citizen's president.

The group blames the increased pollution primarily on population growth near the maquiladoras (factories run by the United States in Mexico) on the Mexican side of the border. (NAFTA supporters, however, had projected a decline in the number of workers in the U.S.-owned factories.) Moreover, Mexico's worst economic crisis in 80 years, **spurred** by the **devaluation** of the peso, has prevented Mexico from spending scarce funds on pollution control.

Pete Emerson, senior economist for the Environmental Defense Fund, one of the major environmental groups that supported NAFTA, said he "absolutely" agrees pollution problems have intensified. "But the solution is not to bash NAFTA," he said. "It is to work cooperatively with Mexico to help resolve the **peso** crisis."

Public Citizen's report was timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the controversial trade pact. In the view of William Moller, University of Michigan business professor and NAFTA expert, two years isn't long enough to judge the agreement's **merits**.

"I think in the longer run it is going to work out," he said. "But you are talking 10 to 20 years." NAFTA critics, however, claim the treaty has failed to live up to many of its supporters' promises, also largely because of Mexico's economic **woes**. . . .

[*This is an excerpt of the full article.*]

Key Words:

devaluation (*n*): a lessening in value
hazardous waste (*n*): dangerous waste that can cause serious health problems when brought into contact with people
incidence (*n*): occurrence
merit (*n*): a strong point or praiseworthy quality
peso (*n*): monetary unit of Mexico
Ralph Nader: American consumer advocate and environmental activist
spurred (*vb*): incited to action; made to develop faster
woe (*n*): trouble; calamity

resource sheet #2

GIVE NAFTA CLEANUP TIME, PANELISTS SAY

By Andrew D. Sirocchi, Society of Environmental Journalists
SEJ Seventh National Conference, 1997

Pollution along the Mexican-American border has been a long-standing problem, and many had hoped that the North American Free Trade Agreement would bring a stronger clean-up effort. Yet, almost four years since NAFTA took effect in January 1994, it is still too early to tell whether the program will be an environmental **catastrophe** or a success. "We have to have a view that this is not a 100-meter race but a marathon," said Victor Lichtinger, executive director of the **Commission for Environmental Cooperation**.

Four of the six panelists at Friday morning's opening plenary of the seventh annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists agreed that NAFTA regulations need more time to be **implemented** and protect the environment. The effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement should be evaluated with the long term in mind, the panelists said.

Felicia Marcus, an Environmental Protection Agency administrator, said that too little time had passed to get accurate results from the international agreement, which includes Mexico, the United States and Canada. John Audley, program coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation, agreed. Although resources are available, he said, cleanup is a long-term process.

Audley said it was most important for the countries to find common ground in their perspectives. "Trade and the environment are two sides of the same coin," Audley said.

Problems on the border have ranged from sewage overflows and unhealthy drinking water to most recently, the increased number of maquiladoras, assembly plants, that are adding to the pollution.

Moderator Steve Curwood, an executive producer at National Public Radio, described the death of an infant who drowned in sewage when it overflowed into his home. Problems are also overrunning the maquiladora region near the border. The region generates an enormous amount of wealth and is extremely powerful, said Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club. Yet the benefit of that wealth, Pope said, is not staying within the region. "There is no **mechanism** in place for that wealth to be used to clean up the border," Pope said.

With all of its problems, panelists also saw a brighter side to the issue. Since NAFTA, Marcus said she has seen a large increase in the level of public attention and political will to change the area. "There has been a huge burst in public participation," Marcus said. "The political focus and the challenge made by environmental committees have made some real results."

In Mexico, the situation is similar. Since NAFTA was **conceived**, Lichtinger said, there has been a big drive in Mexico for the environmental movement. "The problems came from way before," Lichtinger said, "and are not going to change in three years." The two-hour panel was attended by about 200 environmental journalists from newspapers around the country.

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resource sheet #2

Key Words:

catastrophe (*n*): total failure; tragedy
Commission for Environmental Cooperation: international organization created through supplemental agreements to NAFTA; designed to spread awareness of the environment and improve environmental conditions along the border.
conceive (*vb*): to begin; to originate
implement (*vb*): to put into action
mechanism (*n*): a process or technique for achieving a result

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Write short answers to the following questions:

1. List the environmental problems described in the article.

2. Describe how the environmental problems have impacted the border's residents.

3. What have NAFTA's critics said about the problems?

4. How have NAFTA's supporters responded?

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